

Public Exhibition - Naming Policy

File No: X091474

Summary

Names are an important navigation and reference tool in our community. They tell us where we are, define places, and are part of Country and our community's identities.

The City is an evolving place, with new residents, workers, businesses and developments shaping and changing our experience of our local environment. Names should reflect our community's values and history, while also embracing the city's future and aspirations.

The Naming Policy (Policy) provides the City with a framework to consider and progress naming proposals for new Assets and for changing a name of an asset. It is designed to assist the City and third parties to meet their obligations under legislation and in compliance with Geographical Names Board policies, while providing consistency in approach and clarity about naming opportunities.

The current Policy was approved by Council in August 2018. The Policy is scheduled to be reviewed every four years. The Naming Policy has been reviewed and overall remains fit for purpose. The overall direction, principles and aspirations of the updated Policy remain the same. Policy updates fall into three categories: administrative, legislation and policy, and strategic.

This Policy applies to all parks, open spaces, roads and buildings owned, operated or managed by the City of Sydney. The Policy may also be applied to private roads. The Policy also applies to places, including suburbs and urban places.

It provides 14 principles to be applied by the City of Sydney when suggesting, endorsing and approving names. It also provides guidance for when a new name may be considered.

The Policy supports recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in the public domain, dual naming, and the history and precinct distinctiveness of our villages.

The policy complements, and is consistent with, the policies and principles of the Geographical Names Board, which is the official body for naming and recording details of places and geographical names in New South Wales.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the public exhibition of the draft Naming Policy as shown in Attachment A to the subject report for a minimum of 28 days;
- (B) Council note the draft Naming Policy and any recommended changes will be reported back to Council following the exhibition period; and
- (C) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to undertake minor editorial corrections prior to the exhibition of the draft Naming Policy.

Attachments

Attachment A. Draft Naming Policy (changes marked up)

Background

1. Names are an important navigation and reference tool in our community. They tell us where we are, define places, and are part of Country and our community's identities.
2. The city is an evolving place, with new residents, workers, businesses and developments shaping and changing our experience of our local environment. Names should reflect our community's values and history, while also embracing the city's future and aspirations.
3. The Naming Policy provides the City with a framework to consider and progress naming proposals for new Assets and for changing a name of an asset.
4. The Naming Policy is designed to assist the City and third parties to meet their obligations under legislation and compliance with Geographical Names Board policies, while providing consistency in approach and clarity about naming opportunities.
5. The current Policy was approved by Council in August 2018. It was the first time that naming had been comprehensively addressed in a Council policy.
6. The Policy is scheduled to be reviewed every four years.
7. The Policy has been reviewed and overall remains fit for purpose. The overall direction, principles and aspirations of the updated Policy remain the same.
8. The Policy applies to all parks, open spaces, roads and buildings owned, operated or managed by the City of Sydney. The Policy may also be applied to private roads. There are some parks, roads and public spaces that are managed by other NSW government agencies, to which this Policy does not apply.
9. It provides 14 principles to be applied by the City of Sydney when suggesting, endorsing and approving names. It also provides guidance for when a new name may be considered.
10. The Policy supports recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in the public domain, Dual Naming, and the history and precinct distinctiveness of our villages.
11. The Policy incorporates community consultation into the assessment of naming proposals to allow community involvement, transparency and good governance.
12. Updates fall into three categories: administrative, legislation and policy, and strategic.
13. Administrative changes include application of the current policy template, introducing sub-headings for the 14 principles to make it more user friendly, and splitting the Aboriginal Language and Dual Naming principles for clarity (now Principles 4 & 5).
14. Legislation and policy updates include multiple Geographical Names Board policy updates, especially regarding uniqueness, syntax, community sensitivities, dual names, persistence and when a name may be changed.
15. The Aboriginal Languages Act 2017 created the Aboriginal Languages Trust, who have a role in Dual Naming, and reference is inserted under the Dual Naming explanation.

16. Strategic updates include strengthening and adjusting principles to ensure compatibility with Geographical Names Board policies, emphasising the importance of Country and Aboriginal language, clarifying and strengthening the explanation of Aboriginal Place Naming, and simplifying the responsibilities section.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

17. Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision renews the communities' vision for the sustainable development of the city to 2050. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the city, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This policy is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 1 - Responsible governance and stewardship - the Policy supports the practice of standardised addressing and data, provides consistency and transparency in the consideration and determination of naming proposals, and allows community participation in the naming process.
 - (b) Direction 3 - Public places for all - the Policy supports the naming of all public places. There are some open spaces and lanes that have never been formally named as they have not had a primary address function. These are opportunities to provide formal or new names for these locations.
 - (c) Direction 4 - Design excellence and sustainable development - new roads, parks and community facilities are created through the process of city development and urban renewal. The policy supports appropriate naming of these new Assets.
 - (d) Direction 6 - An equitable and inclusive city - names for new Assets provide the opportunity to reflect the communities' values and aspirations, as well as rebalancing previous approaches and priorities for naming. The Policy strongly supports names acknowledging Aboriginal connections to Country through using Aboriginal language and respecting Dual Names, the multicultural nature of our society and gender diversity.
 - (e) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural and creative life - Names are clues to understanding significant stories or signposts to a place's history. Names can connect the past to the present and support precinct distinctiveness.

Organisational Impact

18. This Policy applies to all naming proposals.
19. The Policy is not retrospective.
20. City staff will follow the steps outlined in the Naming Proposal Procedure to progress a naming proposal in a timely manner to implement the principles of the policy through research and key stakeholder engagement and present the proposal to Council for approval.
21. Council will generally consider a single name for public consultation. Council will not concurrently exhibit multiple candidate names to determine their relative popularity.

22. Council is responsible for endorsing the official road name and ensuring it is approved by the Geographical Names Board and gazetted.

Risks

23. Names are essential for navigation, especially for emergency services. Uniqueness is an essential quality to be sought in new names.
24. Names are expected to be enduring; the renaming of features can be confusing and disruptive and is discouraged. Place names assigned by the Geographical Names Board and Road names should not be changed, except where necessary to avoid ambiguity or duplication.
25. Names commemorating a person will only be applied posthumously, at least one year after the death of the person, in line with Geographical Names Board policy. Such a person's contribution to the local community should have been of outstanding benefit and able to be clearly demonstrated. A person's background must be such that it would not bring the City into disrepute.
26. Names considered discriminatory, offensive, demeaning or harmful to social, ethnic, religious or other groups should not be used.

Social / Cultural / Community

27. The value of names extends beyond way-finding. Names provide a very important link between the community and Country. Names can also reflect the history of our diverse communities.
28. Names are clues to understanding significant stories or signposts to a place's history. Many parks, open spaces, roads and buildings in the City of Sydney already have names that are commonly used or are historic in nature. Nevertheless, the names in our city should reflect and respond to our changing demographics, environments and values.
29. Names for new Assets provide the opportunity to reflect the communities' values and aspirations, as well as rebalancing previous approaches and priorities for naming. Names acknowledging the multicultural nature of our society and gender diversity are strongly encouraged.
30. Speaking Aboriginal language is a powerful way to incorporate Aboriginal living culture in our city. New names using Aboriginal language are encouraged, especially for parks and open spaces, and shall be in the local Gadigal language. Such names must be applied meaningfully and respond to Country or culture.
31. Naming a place using Aboriginal language requires engagement with the local Aboriginal community. Culturally appropriate words or phrases will be proposed, with advice from the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel, along with local Aboriginal community members as appropriate to the asset. The City will seek advice on a selected Aboriginal word or phrase prior to the naming proposal being presented to Council.

Economic

32. The renaming of assets such as roads and reserves can be confusing and disruptive. The renaming of assets is discouraged by the City and the Geographical Names Board unless there are compelling reasons for a change.

33. When there is reason to change a name, consideration should also be given to the disruption and impact of the change on local residents and businesses, the expense in updating maps, wayfinding and associated changes, and a loss of part of the history and heritage of an area.

Financial Implications

34. There are no specific budget implications arising from the development of the policy. However, project and asset managers will need to budget for community consultation, including Aboriginal cultural consultation, as part of the design process and for the development of any relevant signage.

Relevant Legislation

35. The Geographical Names Board is the official body for naming and recording details of places and geographical names in NSW established under the Geographical Names Act 1966. The City must conform with the Geographical Names Board's NSW Address Policy and User Manual (May 2021) and the Place Naming Policy (July 2019).
36. The Geographical Names Board has implemented a Dual Naming policy for geographical features and cultural sites since June 2001. The Aboriginal Languages Trust is an Aboriginal-led NSW Government Agency established under the Aboriginal Languages Act 2017. The Trust works with the Geographical Names Board on the use of Aboriginal languages in the naming of geographical places in NSW.
37. Road naming is legislated under the Roads Act 1993. Council is a roads authority under section 7(4). It is responsible for naming and numbering all public roads in its area for which it has authority (section 162). It must conform with and implement the Roads Regulation 2018.
38. Local Government are also responsible for endorsing the official road name and ensuring it is approved by the Geographical Names Board and gazetted.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

39. It is proposed that the Policy will be exhibited for a minimum of 28 days, with a report back to Council following the exhibition period and an assessment of the submissions received.

Public Consultation

40. The secretariat of the Geographical Names Board has reviewed the draft Policy and their feedback has been incorporated into the Policy. The Board will be invited to endorse the policy during the exhibition period.
41. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel was briefed, provided with a draft of the Policy and invited to provide feedback. Questions were answered but no specific changes to the Policy were required.

42. The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council has been provided with the draft Policy for comment.
43. The NSW Aboriginal Languages Trust and the Department of Planning and Environment's Aboriginal Strategy and Outcomes Unit have reviewed the draft Policy. Their comments have also fed into the Policy and will also be considered in the review of staff procedures.
44. It is proposed to exhibit the policy for a minimum of 28 days.
45. The outcome of the community consultation will be reported back to Council for final approval.

EMMA RIGNEY

Director City Life

Lisa Murray, City Historian

Yvette Andrews, Manager City Engagement