

Relevant Information for Council

FILE: X091474 **DATE:** 27 October 2022

TO: Lord Mayor and Councillors

FROM: Emma Rigney, Director City Life

THROUGH: Monica Barone, Chief Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Information Relevant To Item 6.7 – Public Exhibition - Naming Policy

For Noting

This memo is for the information of the Lord Mayor and Councillors.

Background

At the meeting of the Corporate, Finance, Properties and Tenders Committee on 17 October 2022, Councillors requested that consideration be given to including a purpose or principle around proactively making naming more inclusive and a means of rebalancing / revealing what has been hidden in history (in terms of multiculturalism / gender diversity / dual naming).

Further information was also sought on the process and mechanisms (consultation and other) for ensuring that no names are put forward that are offensive/derogatory to any group.

Addressing the imbalance in naming

Inclusiveness and addressing imbalance are important values underpinning the Naming Policy (Policy).

The matter is addressed in the Policy proposed for public exhibition within the 'Policy Statement' and four key naming principles: Aboriginal Language, Dual Naming, Diversity, and Local or Cultural Relevance.

The policy review has added the following sentence in the 'Policy Statement':

"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 commitment to addressing the imbalance could be highlighted higher up in the 'Policy Statement'.

There is also an opportunity to strengthen the commitment to inclusiveness in the principle on Diversity and move this up higher in the list of principles.

These opportunities will be addressed as part of the public exhibition of the draft Policy.

Retrospective naming

The Policy has also been updated to make it clear in the section *When will a name be allocated or changed* that naming proposals will be considered:

- "When a name is perceived, at a given point in time, to be offensive, demeaning, or harmful to the reputation of individuals, or to social, ethnic, religious or other groups"
- "When there is significant community support in assigning or changing a name to a place, space or object."

Persistence is another of the Policy's 14 principles. Names should be enduring and changing names is discouraged unless there is a compelling reason to do so. This policy position is consistent with the NSW Geographical Names Board and similar bodies nationally.

Retrospective name issues are only dealt with if the issue is problematic and impacting on service delivery, or there is significant support in changing a name.

The renaming of roads in particular is discouraged by the Geographical Names Board "unless there are compelling reasons for a change". (Addressing User Manual 6.7.9). "Issues that can prompt renaming include the redesign of a road, changed traffic flow, mail or service delivery problems, duplication issues and addressing problems."

Similarly, the changing of long-established place names (including suburbs and parks) is to be avoided "except where necessary to avoid ambiguity or duplication. ... Changing well established names can lead to address or location confusion, especially to electronic navigation services". (Place Name Policy pp.6-7)

It is very important to emphasise that from an emergency services perspective the changing of names is not encouraged. While the renaming of reserves may be less disruptive, it still has the potential to cause confusion.

For these reasons, the Policy is not retrospective as a whole and neither are the Geographical Names Board policies.

Despite these constraints, staff have been actively pursuing Aboriginal language words and diversity for names since 2010. Attachment A provides more details about Aboriginal place and street names in our Local Government Area.

Staff prioritise parks for Aboriginal language names, as the name can be made more meaningful, respond to the design and landscape and have signage to amplify both the design and the name.

Naming Process

The Naming Policy is implemented by a cross-divisional group of City staff - the Naming Proposal Working Group. The working group is made up of representatives from: City Engagement, City Communications, Indigenous Leadership, City Greening and Leisure, Creative City, City Design, Spatial Information Services and Correspondence. The group meets monthly.

Implementing the Policy is reliant upon the input of the diverse Naming Proposal Working Group, internal and external stakeholder consultation and support from Council to progress a naming proposal to community consultation and then on to the Geographical Names Board.

Naming proposals are carefully considered by City staff prior to presenting to Council. Stakeholder consultation undertaken by the Naming Proposal Working Group prior to going to Council can include the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, and in the case of commemorative naming, family members. The City also seeks advice from other experts and community stakeholders.

The process of naming is highly constrained by policy requirements and legislation. The process of the Naming Proposal Working Group is important as it enables naming proposals to pass through a series of checks to ensure proposals align with the policy's framework and relevant legislation. Community consultation through public exhibition is the final check and balance for the City, however naming is not a popularity contest as highlighted in the Naming Policy.

Memo from Emma Rigney, Director City Life

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Attachments

Attachment A. Aboriginal Place and Street Names in the Local Government Area

Approved



MONICA BARONE
Chief Executive Officer