

Item 8.

Post 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.

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.

On 31 October 2022, Council resolved that the draft Naming Policy ("Policy") be placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days and any recommended changes be reported back to Council following the exhibition period.

The policy was placed on public exhibition for 74 days from 16 December 2022 to 27 February 2023.

Eleven submissions were received. A summary of submissions is provided in Attachment B. Of the 11 submissions, one submission was from a government agency, the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales. The rest were from individuals. Most submissions supported the draft Naming Policy.

In response to feedback, minor amendments have been made to the revised draft Naming Policy 2022 to:

- (a) respond to Geographical Names Board feedback; and
- (b) strengthen the commitment to inclusiveness in the principle on Diversity and move this up higher in the list of principles.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council adopt the revised Naming Policy, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report; and
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to make amendments to the Naming Policy in order to correct any minor drafting errors and finalise design, artwork and accessible formats for publication.

Attachments

- Attachment A.** Revised Naming Policy
- Attachment B.** Consultation Report: Naming Policy

Background

1. The Naming Policy provides the City with a framework to consider and progress naming proposals for new assets and unnamed assets and for changing an existing name.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. The Policy is scheduled to be reviewed every four years.
5. On 31 October 2022, Council resolved that the draft Naming Policy be placed on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days and any recommended changes be reported back to Council following the exhibition period.
6. The Policy was placed on public exhibition for a period of 74 days, from 16 December 2022 to 27 February 2023.
7. Eleven submissions were received, including one from the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales. A summary of the feedback received is provided in Attachment B.
8. As a result of the feedback, several minor amendments have been made to the revised draft Naming Policy to:
 - (a) respond to Geographical Names Board feedback; and
 - (b) strengthen the commitment to inclusiveness in the principle on Diversity and move this up higher in the list of principles.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

9. 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

- 10. This Policy applies to all naming proposals.
- 11. The Policy is not retrospective.
- 12. 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.
- 13. Council will consider a single name for public consultation. Council will not concurrently exhibit multiple candidate names for a site to determine their relative popularity.
- 14. Council is responsible for endorsing the official road name and ensuring it is submitted to the Geographical Names Board for consideration via the NSW Place and Road Naming Proposal System.

Risks

- 15. Names are essential for navigation, especially for emergency services. Uniqueness is an essential quality to be sought in new names.
- 16. 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.
- 17. 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.
- 18. Names considered discriminatory, offensive, demeaning or harmful to social, ethnic, religious or other groups should not be used.

Social / Cultural / Community

19. Names provide a very important link between the community and Country. Names can also reflect the history of our diverse communities.
20. 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.
21. Names for new assets provide the opportunity to reflect the communities' diversity, 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.
22. 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.
23. 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

24. 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.
25. 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

26. There are no specific budget implications arising from the development of the policy. Funding for community consultation, including Aboriginal cultural consultation, as part of the design process and the development of any relevant signage will be incorporated into individual new and asset renewal projects as required.

Relevant Legislation

27. 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).
28. 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.
29. 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.
30. Councils 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

31. The current Naming Policy (2018) will remain in place until the revised Naming Policy is adopted.

Public Consultation

32. The secretariat of the Geographical Names Board has reviewed the draft Policy and their two rounds of feedback have been incorporated into the Policy.
33. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel was briefed, provided with a draft of the Policy and invited to provide feedback prior to public exhibition. Questions were answered but no specific changes to the Policy were required. They were also advised of the public exhibition period.
34. The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council has been kept informed about the revised draft Naming Policy and was provided with the draft Policy for comment. They were also advised of the public exhibition period.
35. The NSW Aboriginal Languages Trust and the Department of Planning and Environment's Aboriginal Strategy and Outcomes Unit reviewed the draft Policy. Their comments have also fed into the Policy.
36. The Policy was placed on public exhibition for a period of 74 days, from 16 December 2022 to 27 February 2023.
37. Advertising of the draft policy comprised two editions of the Sydney Your Say e-newsletter, reaching over 7,000 subscribers with each edition, along with a survey and support material on the Sydney Your Say webpage at:
<https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/policy-planning-changes/your-say-updated-naming-policy>.

38. The City also emailed 38 key stakeholders, including government agencies, neighbouring councils, local history groups, the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel.
39. Eleven submissions were received, nine via online survey and two via email. Of the 11 submissions, one submission was from a government agency, the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales. The rest were from individuals.
40. A summary of the submissions and City response is provided in Attachment B.
41. The Geographical Names Board suggested minor amendments to clarity and alignment with Geographical Names Board policies. These are summarised in Attachment B.

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