

Item 5.

Post Exhibition - Naming Proposal - Ngamuru Avenue

File No: X100685.003

Summary

This report recommends that Council supports the name "Ngamuru Avenue" for the new road connecting Bowden Street in Alexandria to Geddes Avenue in Zetland.

The City of Sydney is building a new road and cycleway that will connect Geddes Avenue in the Green Square town centre with Bowden Street in Alexandria. It will also link to Botany Road, O'Riordan Street and Bourke Road.

The new road and cycleway will prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and also be accessible by emergency vehicles and local vehicles. It will provide an important green, walking and cycling east-west connection for the communities of Alexandria and Green Square.

"Ngamuru" is a word from the Gadigal language - nga (see), muru (path). This means 'to see the way' or 'compass'. This definition is described in the book 'The Sydney Language' by Jakelin Troy.

The word "Ngamuru", linked to direction finding and the location of a path from one place to another, is well suited to this new avenue, the major function of which, is to connect Green Square to Alexandria. The reference to path is particularly relevant as this new avenue will prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and public transport with its separate walking path and cycleway.

The City of Sydney undertook community consultation on the proposed name "Ngamuru Avenue" from 27 June 2024 to 25 July 2024.

The majority of community respondents supported the name on the grounds that the use of local Aboriginal language in naming is meaningful and that it was important to recognise local Aboriginal culture and history in this way.

The name "Ngamuru Avenue" has been given pre-approval status by the Geographical Names Board and is thereby reserved for City of Sydney use as a road name for a period of two years.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the name "Ngamuru Avenue" for the road identified in Attachment A to the subject report; and
- (B) an application be made to the Geographical Names Board for the naming of the place as approved in (A), in accordance with the Geographical Names Act 1996.

Attachments

Attachment A. Map Showing Location of Road

Attachment B. Ngamuru Avenue - Community Engagement Report

Background

1. The City of Sydney is building a new road and cycleway that will connect Geddes Avenue in the Green Square town centre with Bowden Street in Alexandria. It will also link to Botany Road, O'Riordan Street and Bourke Road.
2. It is identified as a local road in the Sydney Development Control Plan 2012.
3. The new road and cycleway will prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and public transport and also be accessible to emergency vehicles and local vehicles.
4. It will provide an important green, walking and cycling east-west connection for the communities of Alexandria and Green Square.
5. Works are nearing completion. The first stage of the avenue was opened in July 2024. The second stage is due to be opened in late 2024.
6. The name "Ngamuru Avenue" has been selected by the Naming Proposals Working Group, in accordance with the City's Naming Policy which encourages the use of local Gadigal language words and that they can be applied to describe the function of a place. The word was selected using 'The Sydney Language' publication as a reference and with input from members of the Indigenous Leadership and Engagement Team.
7. In accordance with the City of Sydney's Naming Policy, the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council has been given an opportunity to supply feedback on this name via a letter from City of Sydney Chief Executive Officer to the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council in April 2024. The Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council has indicated their support for this proposed name. City staff from the Naming Proposals Working Group presented the name "Ngamuru Avenue" to the City of Sydney's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel in May 2024. The Panel discussed the name and provided advice regarding pronunciation and ways that the word has been used previously within the community.
8. Pronunciation advice from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel was similar to the pronunciation advice within 'The Sydney Language' publication, which suggests 'ng' is pronounced as in the word 'sing'. They recommended the spelling nga be used to explain the pronunciation of the first part of the word.
9. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel also mentioned that this word (with a variation on spelling) was previously used as the name of an employment service in Redfern. The City Historian confirmed that the NAAMROO Skillshare Centre on Redfern Street was recorded by Steve Miller in the cultural mapping work in 2012. The previous use of this word as a business name does not present any issues for its use as a road name due to the significantly different spelling being employed and the fact that this local business no longer operates.
10. The name "Ngamuru Avenue" has been given pre-approval status by the Geographical Names Board and is thereby reserved for City of Sydney use as a road name for a period of two years.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision

11. 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 report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 1 - Responsible governance and stewardship - formally naming the lane will ensure its gazettal and recognition with the NSW Geographical Names Board.
 - (b) Direction 5 - A city for walking, cycling and public transport - formally naming the avenue will assist in wayfinding.
 - (c) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural and creative life - selecting an Aboriginal word to name this new major avenue will increase the public's understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal culture. This proposal would recognise local Aboriginal cultural heritage through naming, related interpretive signage and other opportunities as they arise.

Organisational Impact

12. The City will ensure signage (street and interpretive) is installed once construction is complete. It will have minimal organisational impact.
13. There are no identified risks associated with the naming proposal.

Social / Cultural / Community

14. This proposal would recognise local Aboriginal cultural heritage through naming, related interpretive signage and other opportunities as they arise.
15. The community have an opportunity to comment on the naming proposal during the exhibition period.

Economic

16. The new road is an important east-west connection to the Green Square town centre. Giving it a powerful and relevant name will strengthen the identity of the area.

Financial Implications

17. There are funds available in the 2024/25 operational budget, for the installation of street and interpretive signage.

Relevant Legislation

18. The Geographic Names Act 1966 (NSW) and Geographical Names Board Guidelines – the recommended name complies with this legislation and meets the Geographical Names Board Guidelines.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

19. The first part of this road was opened on 27 July 2024 without a gazetted name. The second stage is scheduled to open in December 2024. To aid wayfinding for the public and emergency services it is important that the name is gazetted as soon as possible so that addresses can be assigned/designated.
20. Should Council approve the name a formal naming application will be submitted to the Geographical Names Board for consideration.

Public Consultation

21. As the authority responsible for Road Naming, the City has sought feedback from the community on the proposed name.
22. The naming proposal was placed on public exhibition from 27 June to 25 July, 2024. It was placed on the Sydney Your Say website with a survey feedback form, a letter was sent to 1,796 properties surrounding the site, a public notice was placed on site and it was included in the July edition of the Sydney Your Say email newsletter which was sent to 6,650 subscribers.
23. A total of 72 submissions were received.
24. The majority of community respondents supported the name. Overall 57 per cent supported the name with 43 per cent of people opposing. Of those respondents that live in the area, 58 per cent support the name.
25. People were given the option to comment on why they supported or did not support the proposed name. The primary reasons given in support of the proposal were that:
 - (a) It is important to recognise local Aboriginal culture and history through naming.
 - (b) The use of local Aboriginal language in naming is meaningful.
26. The primary reasons given in opposition to the name were that:
 - (a) The word is difficult to pronounce.
 - (b) Concerns that one continuous stretch of road will have three names.
27. Of those community members that did not support the name the most commonly cited concern was that it was hard to pronounce. This concern will be addressed through the interpretive signage that the City will install onsite. This signage will explain the meaning of the language words and include pronunciation guidance.
28. The next most cited concern was that one continuous stretch of road will now have three names.
29. In relation to this City staff have advised that selecting a new name for this new stretch of road, rather than making it an extension of Bowden Street (extending Geddes Avenue is not technically possible from a street numbering perspective), is preferable from a wayfinding and emergency services response perspective.

Further to this, the new name for this stretch of road separate to Bowden Street (to its west) or Geddes Avenue (to its east) is recommended by Geographical Names Board's Address Policy User Manual (point 6.7.9) as there is a 'changed traffic flow' – as this section of the road cannot be driven in a vehicle currently (only cyclists and pedestrians). In the future when the road is fully operational it will also serve as a bus corridor and provide access for local traffic (only vehicles that are accessing an address on that stretch of road). This therefore constitutes a 'changed traffic flow' on this stretch of road when compared to either of its two adjoining streets so it should have its own name.

31. If Council approves the name, an application will be made to the Geographical Names Board for gazettal. As part of this process the Geographical Names Board will also notify the public through their website as part of their routine procedure for the naming of roads. If objections are raised, the proposal is returned to Council for further comment or amendment if required.

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Chief Operating Officer

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