
Naming Policy

Purpose

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

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.

This policy provides clear direction for the naming of suburbs, roads, parks, open spaces, places and buildings that are owned, operated or managed by the City of Sydney.

It provides principles for determining and approving a name, and when a name may be changed or considered for dual naming.

Naming of assets is covered by various pieces of legislation. This policy ensures that naming principles meet legislative requirements while providing consistency in approach and clarity about naming opportunities.

Context

The Council of the City of Sydney acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of our land, Australia. The City acknowledges the Gadigal of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of this place we now call Sydney.

The Eora had named their land long before the British invaded and usurped the landscape, re-naming it for their own cultural sensibilities. There are many sites across our local government area with historical and cultural significance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Names provide a very important link between the community and the country or places in which the name appears. Names can also reflect the history of our communities. This policy supports dual naming, recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in the public domain, and the precinct distinctiveness of our villages.

The Council of the City of Sydney recognises that, by acknowledging our shared past, we are laying the groundwork for a future which embraces all Australians, a future based on mutual respect and shared responsibility for our land.

This 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 NSW.

Scope

The Policy applies to all parks, open spaces, roads and buildings owned, operated or managed by the City of Sydney.

This policy also applies to places, including suburbs and localities, but does not supersede any requirements of the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales, who are the naming authority for places in the state of New South Wales.

This policy will also be used in the consideration of any names suggested by the general public or requests from the community for endorsement of a name that they intend to submit to the Geographical Names Board.

This policy does not apply retrospectively.

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Assets	Suburbs, roads, parks, open spaces, places and buildings that are owned, operated or managed by the City of Sydney.
Assigned	Geographical name in terms of the Geographical Names Act 1966, approved and gazetted by the Geographical Names Board.
Authorities	The Roads Regulation 2008 requires local government to service notice of road naming proposals to the prescribed authorities listed in Regulation 7.1. The list of prescribed authorities includes: Australia Post, Registrar-General, Surveyor-General, Chief Executive of the Ambulance Service of NSW, Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW Police Force, State Emergency Service, New South Wales Volunteer Rescue Association Incorporated, and for a classified road, the Roads and Maritime Services.
Dual naming	An official designation by the Geographical Names Board to register original place names given by Aboriginal people so that they sit side by side with existing European names. It applies to geographical features and cultural sites.
Geographical Names Board of New South Wales	Established by the Geographical Names Act 1966 as the official body for naming and recording details of places and geographical names in NSW
NSW Addressing User Manual	Document that outlines the Geographical Names Board policy, principles, processes and procedures for addressing in NSW.
Locality	Defined by the Geographical Names Board as a named geographical area with defined boundaries which represents a community or area of interest and may be rural or urban in character (where urban it is usually defined as a suburb).

Term	Meaning
Place	Defined by the Geographical Names Act 1966 as any geographical or topographical feature or any area, district, division, locality, region, city, town, village, settlement or railway station or any other place within the territories and waters of the State of New South Wales
Road	All formed roads, including private roads (roads for which the care and maintenance is not the responsibility of a Local Government) that are generally open to the public or to services.

When will a name be allocated or changed?

From time to time, there are circumstances for considering new names. New roads, parks and community facilities are created through the process of significant redevelopment and urban renewal. These are all opportunities for new names.

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 for new names.

The value of names extends beyond way-finding. 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.

The names in our city should reflect and respond to our changing demographics, environments and values.

Naming proposals may be considered under the following circumstances:

- The development of a new road, park or open space;
- The development and opening of a new building or open space, or the re-opening of a building or open space that has been significantly changed (for example, demolished and re-built) or whose use has been significantly changed;
- The change in ownership of a road, park or public space (for example, a private laneway that has now been made public);
- When a road, park, or open space does not have a name and this creates confusion given its role;
- When there is significant community interest in assigning or changing a name to a place, space or object.

When there is reason to change a name, consideration should be given to members of the public, expense in updating maps and associated collateral, and a loss of part of the history and heritage of an area.

Naming Principles

The following principles, consistent with those in the NSW Addressing User Manual, should be applied by the City when suggesting, endorsing and approving names.

1. Names must be meaningful, clear and concise, and can reflect the location and purpose.

2. Names must have local or cultural relevance, reflecting the heritage and history of local people, events, the community or landscape. Names should not refer to or reflect current commercial businesses in that location.
3. Dual naming to restore traditional Gadigal names to geographical features is strongly supported. Aboriginal names are encouraged and shall be in the local Gadigal language, chosen in consultation with the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel.
4. Names acknowledging the multicultural nature of our society and gender diversity are encouraged.
5. Place names assigned by the Geographical Names Board and road names should not be changed, except where necessary to avoid ambiguity or duplication. These names become part of the historical fabric of a community and should be respected as such.
6. Names that perpetuate the names of eminent persons, such as historical figures, prominent local residents or community identities, may be considered. These names will normally only be applied posthumously, however there may be occasions when a name is suggested which honours a living person. Such a person's contribution to the local community should have been of outstanding benefit to the community. Ownership of the land is not sufficient reason for the application of the owner's name to a geographical feature.
7. The name of a person still holding public office will not be used.
8. Long and clumsily constructed names and names composed of two or more words (for placenames) or more than three words (for roads) should be avoided except where culturally appropriate.
9. Repetition of commonly used names will be avoided.
10. Duplication of road names within the local government area, and within a 10 kilometre radius must be avoided.
11. Names for different parts of the same feature, such as a park or building, will be avoided whenever possible and the one name applied throughout its entire space unless there are very clearly defined boundaries between one space and another or distinct features warranting a separate name.
12. Where names have been changed or corrupted by long established local usage, it is not usually advisable to attempt to restore the original form; that spelling which is sanctioned by general usage should be adopted.
13. Names considered offensive or likely to give offence should not be used.
14. Names must conform to the principles in the Place Naming Policy and the NSW Addressing User Manual endorsed by the Geographical Names Board, particularly in relation to language, grammar and duplication.
15. The community will be consulted on all naming proposals through public exhibition.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural recognition

The City of Sydney is committed to recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and history in the public domain. The naming principles support dual naming and the application of Aboriginal words for new names. Acknowledgment of country on signage is another way to embed cultural recognition in the public domain.

Dual naming

Dual naming recognises Aboriginal cultural heritage by registering original names for places and sites given by Aboriginal traditional owners so that they sit alongside existing European names. The Geographical Names Board of New South Wales has implemented a dual naming policy for geographical features and cultural sites since June 2001.

The dual naming system applies to already named geographical features such as points, headlands, coves, rivers, creeks, waterfalls, beaches, harbours, islands, mountains and caves – specifically those cultural and environmental features of significance to the local Aboriginal community. The Geographical Names Board policy does not apply to suburbs, towns, streets or urban parks.

A dual name must be from the local area. Aboriginal names for dual namings should only be used when there is definitive evidence of the geographic Gadigal name, in the form of oral or written tradition. The determination of this name, and the spelling and its use, resides in the hands of the traditional owners of the land or the organisations that represent them. Linguistic and language experts will also be consulted.

Dual naming allows for signposts, maps and directories to feature both names. The Geographical Names Board assigns the order of the names. According to the Geographical Names Board's dual naming guidelines, whichever of the two names of the same feature that is most likely to be used by the local community is to be used first in a sequence. The order of the names will be reviewed by the Geographical Names Board at regular intervals who will then inform mapping agencies on any changes to the naming sequence. Both the Aboriginal part and the introduced part of the dual name shall be given equal treatment.

Dual naming means that all geographical features, landmarks and open spaces in the City can potentially also have a Gadigal name reinstated in the name and on signage. For example, the geographical point Dawes Point was assigned a dual name in 2002 and is now officially "Dawes Point / Tar-Ra". Research undertaken by the Geographical Names Board in 2001-2002 with Aboriginal linguists demonstrates that few opportunities exist within the Local Government area beyond the points and coves around Sydney Harbour, many of which have already been dual named.

Aboriginal language words

Local words of Aboriginal origin are encouraged for new naming proposals for all assets, particularly streets, parks and buildings. Consideration may be given to a name or word, for example, from the Gadigal language that recognises or describes:

- the historic flora or fauna of the area, eg. Garraway Park ("sulphur crested cockatoo");
- a generic term for a geographical feature or landmark, eg. Gunyama Park ("wind from the south-west")
- an event, gesture or occupation of historical or contemporary relevance to the place, eg. Magari Street ("to fish");
- a name that recognises an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, or historic community event or connection, eg. Pemulwuy Park.

The notebooks of William Dawes are a valuable word list for local Gadigal words. Jakelin Troy's *The Sydney Language* (1994) is a valuable reference work collating provenance and spellings of Gadigal words. These works should be drawn upon to select appropriate Gadigal language for naming proposals. The spelling of words may be adjusted in consultation with language experts to encourage the appropriate phonetic pronunciation.

Acknowledgement of country for signage

Acknowledgement of country on signs in public places is a powerful way to reassert the presence and heritage of Aboriginal people. A park, building or place may have one name reflecting its more contemporary history and also include on the signage an acknowledgment of country. For example, park signage across the local government area is being systematically updated to include an acknowledgment of country. The signs will read "Bujari gamarruwa. Welcome to [insert park name]. You are on Gadigal Country".

Responsibilities

Suburbs and localities

- The Geographical Names Board has the statutory responsibility under the Geographical Names Act 1966 to assign names and determine definitive boundaries for suburbs and localities throughout NSW.
- Suburb and locality names should have the endorsement of the local council or the government department that administers the area where the feature is located. Council plays an important role in consulting with residents, businesses and other interested stakeholders.

Roads

- The role of the Geographical Names Board in the road naming process is to set policy and processes for all road naming proposals in NSW, and to compile, maintain and publish a list of road names as per s.5(2) of the Geographical Names Act 1966.
- Local Government has the statutory responsibility as a Road Naming Authority under the Roads Act 1993 and Roads Regulation 2008 for naming and gazetting regional roads and local roads.
- The Road Naming Authority must exhibit naming proposals and serve notice on persons and bodies as defined in the Roads Regulation 2008 regarding naming proposals and naming decisions.
- For private roads, Crown roads, rights of ways and easements, Local Government are responsible for endorsing the authoritative road name and ensuring it is approved by the Geographical Names Board.
- The NSW Online Road Naming System supports the application of the road naming processes in a collaborative environment accessed by local government, Spatial Services in the Department of Finance, Services and Innovation, and the Geographical Names Board.
- The NSW Address Policy adopted by the Geographical Names Board applies to all roads in NSW, regardless of custodianship and maintenance agreements.

Parks and Open Spaces

- The City is responsible for the naming of parks and open spaces which it owns or manages. While there is no legislative requirement to officially name parks, it assists with addressing.

- The Geographical Names Board maintains a Geographical Names Register and the City will submit the names of parks, reserves and open spaces to the Geographical Names Board to be officially assigned and recognised.

Buildings

- The naming of buildings is not covered by legislation. The City may name its building assets as it sees fit. Building names can assist with identity, clarity of purpose and addressing.
- There is no requirement or guidelines under the Geographical Names Board for the naming of buildings or other objects/spaces not defined as a road, park or a place; however for consistency and transparency, the City will apply the same principles for all spaces, places and objects requiring a name.

Policy implementation

Implementation of this policy rests with the responsible officers accountable for the asset to be named or renamed. The operational actions required to progress a naming proposal, and internal and external consultation required, is outlined in the Naming Proposal Procedure.

All Gadigal language names, whether proposed as a single name or for dual naming, must be endorsed as culturally appropriate by the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and the City of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel prior to a Naming Proposal Report going to Council.

Council will generally consider a single name for public consultation.

All naming proposals must be:

- checked for conformance with this policy and the policies and principles of the NSW Addressing User Manual, for roads and localities
- checked for conformance with GNB Guidelines for the determination of placenames
- approved in principle by Council for public exhibition
- placed on public exhibition and consultation undertaken with Authorities, local residents and businesses (as appropriate)
- endorsed by Council
- submitted to the Geographical Names Board for approval or registration on the Geographical Names Register, and finally
- Gazetted in the NSW Government Gazette.

All names, excepting buildings, must be submitted to the Geographical Names Board to be officially assigned and included on the Geographical Names Register and gazetted. Council remains the authority for road names, and although endorsed by the Geographical Names Board and included on a roads names list (the NSW Online Road Naming System), Council has the responsibility for gazetting the name.

This policy applies to all naming proposals. Council may approve names outside this policy.

Consultation

This policy aligns with the Geographical Names Board's NSW Addressing User Manual and Guidelines for the Determination of Placenames. Existing names can be checked via the Geographical Names Board's website <http://www.gnb.nsw.gov.au/>

The policy also embraces the philosophy of the NSW Heritage Council's Policy on Place Names of Heritage Value.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel has been consulted in the drafting of this policy.

Internal staff affected by this policy, including Spatial Information, Strategic Planning, History, Parks and Open Spaces, and Community Engagement teams, have been consulted in the drafting of this policy.

The Policy will be reviewed every four years to ensure consistency with legislation, the Geographical Names Board policy and principles and to confirm that it is supporting recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and history in the public domain. This will be done in consultation with the City of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel.

References

Laws and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Geographical Names Act 1966 (NSW)• Roads Act 1993 (NSW)• Roads Regulation 2008 (NSW)
Policies, procedures and guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NSW Address Policy• NSW Addressing User Manual• Geographical Names Board Place Naming Policy• Geographical Names Board Guidelines for the Determination of Placenames• NSW Heritage Council – Place Names of Heritage Value Policy• City of Sydney Cultural Policy• City of Sydney Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols• City of Sydney History Policy

Approval

The Council approved this policy on 13 August 2018.

Review

Review period	Next review date	TRIM reference
The City Historian will review this policy every four years.	August, 2022	2018/470811