

Naming Policy

Purpose

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.

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.

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.

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. They are responsible for the NSW Address Policy and User Manual (APUM) and the NSW Place Name Policy.

Context

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

Gadigal named Country, articulating their physical, spiritual, cultural and social connection to the land. Long before the British invaded and usurped the landscape, re-naming it for their own cultural sensibilities, the Gadigal knew and cared for Country.

Names provide a very important link between the community and Country. Names can also reflect the history of our diverse communities.

This Policy supports recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in the public domain, dual naming, and the precinct distinctiveness of our villages. Speaking Aboriginal language is a powerful way to incorporate Aboriginal living culture in our city.

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

Scope

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. There are some parks, roads and public spaces that are managed by other NSW government agencies, to which this Policy does not apply.

This Policy also applies to places, including Suburbs and Urban Places, 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, Urban Places, 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, endorsed and gazetted by the Geographical Names Board.
Dual Naming	An official designation by the Geographical Names Board. A dual naming system may be used for assigning the traditional Aboriginal name of geographical features when a non-Aboriginal assigned geographical name already exists. Dual naming shall not apply to localities, towns or roads.
Geographical Names Board of New South Wales (GNB)	Established by the Geographical Names Act 1966 as the official body for naming and recording details of places and geographical names in NSW. Acronym is GNB.
Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council	Aboriginal-led community organisation representing metropolitan Sydney, established following the introduction of the NSW Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983.
<u>NSW Address Policy and User Manual (APUM)</u>	Policy of the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales. Provides the policy, principles, processes and procedures for addressing in New South Wales. Acronym is APUM.
<u>NSW Place Naming Policy</u>	Policy of the Geographical Names Board of New South Wales.
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

Term	Meaning
	within the territories and waters of the State of New South Wales but does not include any road, any area (within the meaning of the Local Government Act 1993), area of operations of a county council or a joint organisation area (within the meaning of that Act), any electoral district under the Electoral Act 2017, any school or any place or place within a class of places to which the provisions of this Act do not apply by virtue of the regulations.
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.
Road Type	Typology used in the NSW Address Policy derived from AS/NZS 4819:2011 Urban and Rural Addressing that describes and defines open ended roads, cul-de-sac or pedestrian only roads. Applied to all roads in New South Wales.
Suburb	Also known as address locality. Defined in the NSW Address Policy 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). Suburbs are used to clearly define an address (along with number and road name).
Urban Place	Defined by the Geographical Names Board in APUM as a named geographical area which has no official boundaries. For this reason, an urban place name cannot be used for addressing purposes (e.g. Kings Cross is an urban place, it forms part of the Potts Point, Darlinghurst, Rushcutters Bay and Elizabeth Bay localities in Sydney).

Policy Statement

Names are an essential element of wayfinding. Names are expected to be enduring.

Names are also 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.

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.

Road names are critical for wayfinding and must be clear for emergency services provisions. 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 and strong community support.

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 to provide formal or new names for these locations.

Naming Proposals

Naming proposals may be considered under the following circumstances:

- the development of a new Road (public or private), park or open space
- the development and opening of a new building, or the re-opening of a building, park 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
- mail or service delivery problems, duplication issues and addressing problems
- 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. An assessment clarifying origins, community sentiment and support must be carried out in such circumstances.
- when there is significant community support in assigning or changing a name to a place, space or object.

When there is reason to change an existing 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.

The Geographical Names Board has specific policies and requirements for reserves and Road names when considering a change for an existing name.

- For reserves (from Place Naming Policy):
Names chosen for reserves are expected to be enduring, and the renaming of these features is confusing and disruptive and is discouraged. If the renaming of a reserve is proposed, evidence of community support for the name change must be provided. The GNB will then evaluate the merits of the proposal before making a decision.
- For Roads (from NSW Address Policy and User Manual):
Road names are intended to be enduring, and the renaming of roads is discouraged unless there are compelling reasons for a change. Issues that can prompt renaming include the redesign of a road, changed traffic flow, mail or service delivery problems, duplication issues and addressing problems.

Naming Principles

The following principles are applied by the City when proposing, endorsing and approving names. These principles comply with the Geographical Names Board policies.

1. Meaningful

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

2. Uniqueness

Uniqueness is an essential quality to be sought in new names to assist with emergency services provisions.

Duplication of Road names must be avoided within the Suburb, adjoining Suburb, and within a 10-kilometre radius.

Suburb names must not be duplicated within Australia.

Duplication of other Place names (eg. parks) should be avoided within the local government area or adjoining local government area.

Duplication includes identical or similar spelling and/or pronunciation.

3. Diversity

Names acknowledging the multicultural nature of our society and gender diversity are strongly encouraged. Inclusiveness and addressing the imbalance of previous approaches are significant priorities for new names.

4. Aboriginal Language

New names using local 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.

For Aboriginal naming proposals, the City will consult with local Aboriginal community members, as appropriate to the Asset, and seek advice from the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel on a selected Aboriginal word prior to the naming proposal being presented to Council and going out for wider public exhibition.

Aboriginal place naming is discussed further below.

5. Dual Naming

Dual naming to restore traditional Gadigal names to geographical features and cultural sites is strongly supported.

Dual names Assigned by the Geographical Names Board will sit alongside the existing non-Aboriginal name.

When a feature already has an official non-Aboriginal name, the traditional Aboriginal name can also be recognised officially by the Geographical Names Board assigning it as a dual name. This means the feature has two names, an Aboriginal name and a non-Aboriginal name, with both having equal status and being considered official names. The names can be used individually or combined.

Dual naming does not apply to Suburbs or Roads.

Aboriginal place naming is discussed further below.

6. Local or Cultural Relevance

Names must have local or cultural relevance, reflecting the heritage and history of local people, events, the community, its values or landscape.

Names should not refer to or reflect current commercial businesses in that location.

However, business names no longer in use which promote the heritage of an area are acceptable.

7. Commemorative

Names that commemorate an event or place, or social movement are encouraged.

Names of exceptional persons, such as historical figures, prominent local residents or community identities, may be considered. 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.

Names commemorating a person will only be applied posthumously, at least one year after the death of the person.

Ownership of the land is not sufficient reason for the application of the owner's name to a geographical feature, park, reserve, Place, Road or Suburb.

The name of a person still holding public office shall not be used.

8. **Persistence**

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. These names become part of the historical fabric of a community and should be respected as such.

If the renaming of an Asset is proposed, evidence of community support for the name change is required from the City. If the Geographical Names Board approves the proposal to move forward, they will put the name on consultation for public comment before the new name can be endorsed.

9. **Syntax**

Names shall be easy to pronounce and recall, allowing for socialisation of new names. Names should not exceed three words (including any Road Type or Designation Value). Only one name can be used for commemorative Road naming, either a given name or surname.

10. **One Name Throughout**

Separate names for different parts of the same site, such as parts of 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 or a building warranting a separate name.

11. **Established Local Usage**

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.

12. **Community Sensitivities**

Names considered discriminatory, offensive, demeaning or harmful to social, ethnic, religious or other groups should not be used.

13. **GNB Compatibility**

Names must conform to the Geographical Names Board policies on addressing and place names, including the [NSW Address Policy and User Manual](#) and the [Place Naming Policy](#), particularly in relation to language, syntax, grammar, duplication, Road Type and Designation Value.

14. **Community Consultation**

The community will be consulted on conforming naming proposals through public exhibition. For Aboriginal naming proposals, the City will consult with local Aboriginal community members, as appropriate to the Asset, and seek advice from the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel on a selected Aboriginal word prior to the naming proposal being presented to Council and going out for wider public exhibition.

Aboriginal place naming

The City of Sydney is committed to recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and history in the public domain.

Aboriginal place naming encompasses both the use of Aboriginal language in naming and the recognition and restoration of traditional Aboriginal names for geographical features (known as Dual Naming). The City's naming principles support the application of Aboriginal language for new names, unnamed geographical features and Dual Naming. This conforms with the Geographical Names Board [guidelines on Aboriginal place naming](#). Acknowledgment of country on signage is another way to embed cultural recognition in the public domain.

Aboriginal language words

Local words of Aboriginal origin in the Gadigal language can be applied to place naming. Aboriginal language names are encouraged for new naming proposals, particularly parks and open spaces, and places with a significant Indigenous connection or use.

Names may be derived from the Gadigal language to describe the characteristics of the feature or place, tell the history, story or Songline of the feature or place, or may be a translation from the local language of a value, action or function of the place.

Consideration may be given to a name or word, for example, from the Gadigal language that recognises or describes:

- the historic flora, fauna or landscape of Country, 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. Yellomundee Park.
- a phrase reflecting Aboriginal ways of thinking and doing
- Ancestral creator beings, Songlines, Dreaming Stories and their relationship to Country.

Naming proposals using Aboriginal language must be respectful, respond to Country, culture and spirituality, reflect Aboriginal ways of thinking and doing, and use local language. Such names must be applied meaningfully to the place or space, supporting cultural recognition, community benefit, and the NSW Government Architect's Connecting With Country draft framework.

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. Wider consultation with the general community occurs during the public exhibition of a naming proposal.

Dual Naming

Dual Naming officially recognises Aboriginal cultural heritage by restoring and registering the original place names used by Aboriginal people for geographical features and cultural sites that

have a registered post-colonial settlement name. Dual names Assigned by the Geographical Names Board sit alongside the existing non-Aboriginal name.

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. Dual Naming does not apply to suburbs, towns, or roads or other post-settlement administrative features.

A dual name must be from the local area. A dual name can only be Assigned where there is plausible historical evidence in the form of oral or documental sources, that the feature has an existing Aboriginal name and that some authority or authenticity can be attributed to the source or sources for the form, origin, spelling, history and meaning of the name. The dual name cannot be a new name assigned for the purpose of a tribute.

Dual Naming means the geographical feature has two names, an Aboriginal name and a non-Aboriginal name, with both having equal status and being considered official names. The names can be used individually or combined.

Dual Naming means that all geographical features in the City could potentially also have a Gadigal name reinstated as an Assigned name and be recognised on signage. For example, the geographical point Dawes Point was Assigned a dual name in 2002 and is now officially 'Tar-Ra / Dawes Point'. 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.

Acknowledging country on signage

Acknowledging Country 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.

Responsibilities

This Policy applies to all naming proposals. The Policy is not retrospective.

Council will consider a single conforming name for public consultation. Council will not concurrently exhibit multiple candidate names to determine their relative popularity.

Different Assets have specific considerations, requirements and responsibilities under legislation with which the City of Sydney must comply. Council is a Road Naming Authority under the Roads Act 1993 s.7(4). It is responsible for naming and numbering all public roads in its area for which it has authority (s.162). The City must also conform with the Geographical Names Board's NSW Address Policy and User Manual (May 2021) and the Place Naming Policy (July 2019).

Implementation of this Policy rests with employees on the Naming Proposal Working Group and the responsible officer accountable for the Asset proposed to be named or renamed. Employees

will follow the steps outlined in the Naming Proposal Procedure to progress a naming proposal in a timely manner.

The Naming Proposal Working Group will confirm the naming proposal:

- is appropriate for the Asset to be named
- conforms with the principles and intent of this Policy
- conforms with the Geographical Names Board policies for place names and addressing
- embraces appropriate consultation with the Aboriginal community
- is checked for eligibility and reserved in the NSW Place and Road Naming Proposal System (as appropriate for the Asset).

If a naming proposal is endorsed by the Naming Proposal Working Group, a formal process through Council and the Geographical Names Board must take place for Roads and Place names.

For Roads the naming proposal must be:

- conforming with the NSW Road Regulation 2018 and the NSW Address Policy and User Manual;
- endorsed in principle by Council for public exhibition;
- notice served on Relevant Parties as defined in the *Roads Regulation 2018* and notice of the proposal published in a local newspaper or on the City's website;
- placed on public exhibition and consultation undertaken with local residents, businesses and the general community (as appropriate);
- approved by Council resolution;
- submitted to the Geographical Names Board for consideration, via the NSW Place and Road Naming Proposal System, accompanied by evidence of Council resolution and community consultation;
- approved or rejected by GNB Secretariat on behalf of Surveyor-General and Government
- if approved, gazetted in the NSW Government Gazette, notice issued to Relevant Parties, Names Gazetteer updated;
- notification and signage by the City.

For Place names – including Suburbs, Urban Places, parks, open spaces and reserves – the naming proposal must be:

- conforming with the GNB's Place Naming Policy;
- endorsed in principle by Council for public exhibition;
- placed on public exhibition and consultation undertaken with local Aboriginal community, local residents, businesses and the general community (as appropriate to the Asset);
- submitted to the Geographical Names Board for consideration, via the NSW Place and Road Naming Proposal System, accompanied by evidence of Council resolution, community consultation, and (for Aboriginal place names) endorsement by the local Aboriginal community;
- supported, deferred or rejected by Geographical Names Board;
- if supported, placed by GNB on public exhibition;
- if no objections, name becomes official;

- GNB updates the official NSW mapping database and Geographical Names Register;
- notification and signage by the City.

Consultation

The Geographical Names Board has been consulted in the review of this Policy. 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 Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, the NSW Aboriginal Languages Trust and the City's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel has been consulted in the review of this Policy.

Internal staff affected by this Policy have been consulted via the Naming Proposal Working Group.

References

Laws and Standards
• Geographical Names Act 1966 (NSW)
• Aboriginal Languages Act 2017 (NSW)
• Roads Act 1993 (NSW)
• Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
• Roads Regulation 2018 (NSW)
• AS/NZS 4819:2011 Urban and Rural Addressing

Policies and Procedures
• Geographical Names Board, NSW Address Policy and User Manual (May 2021)
• Geographical Names Board, Place Naming Policy (July 2019)
• NSW Government Architect, Connecting With Country draft framework (Nov 2020)
• NSW Heritage Council, Place Names of Heritage Value Policy (Sept 2004)
• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Protocols (Nov 2012)
• History Policy (June 2018)
• Naming Proposal Procedures (June 2019, currently under review)

Review period

The Policy will be reviewed every four years to ensure consistency with legislation, the Geographical Names Board policies and principles and to confirm that it is supporting

recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and history in the public domain.

Approval Status

Council approved this policy on 15 May 2023

Approval History

Stage	Date	Comment	TRIM Reference
Original Policy	13 August 2018	Approved by Council	2018/470802
Reviewed	15 May 2023	Approved by Council. Key changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Principles clarified• Administrative (template, grammar)• Legislative references updated• Consultation strengthened	2018/470802
Commence Review Date	15 August 2026		
Approval Due Date	15 May 2027		

Ownership and approval

Responsibility	Role
Author	City Historian
Owner	City Historian
Endorser	City of Sydney Executive
Approver	City of Sydney Council