

Post Exhibition – Naming Proposal – Ngana Gili Plaza, Sydney

File No: X116933.030

Summary

The plaza in front of the new Salesforce tower at 180 George Street is defined by the public artwork of Indigenous artist Daniel Boyd. The artwork is a canopy suspended above the plaza. This new plaza requires naming.

Daniel Boyd has suggested the Gadigal language words – “ngana” “gili” to name this plaza. “Ngana gili” (pronounced nga-nah-gilly - note: ‘ng’ is pronounced as in the word sing) translates as “black light”. This name references astronomy and the movement of light and moonlight seen through the circles cut out of the artwork’s black canopy.

The City of Sydney is committed to recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and history in the public domain. Principle 4 of the City of Sydney naming policy states that new names using local Aboriginal language are encouraged, especially for parks and open spaces like this plaza, and shall be in the local Gadigal language.

This report recommends that Council provide in-principle approval to name this plaza: “Ngana gili Plaza”, enabling an application to be made to the Geographical Names Board for the naming of the plaza.

The proposed name complies with the City of Sydney naming policy.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council approve the adoption of the name "Ngana Gili Plaza" for the space 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 the Plaza

Attachment B. Community Engagement Report

Background

1. The plaza in front of the new Salesforce tower at 180 George Street is defined by the public artwork of Indigenous artist Daniel Boyd. The artwork is a canopy suspended above the plaza. This new plaza requires naming.
2. Daniel Boyd has suggested the local Aboriginal language words – “ngana” “gili” to name this plaza. “Ngana gili” translates as “black light”. “Ngana” and “gili” are Gadigal words, documented in Jakelin Troy’s book *The Sydney Language*.
3. This name references astronomy and the movement of light and moonlight seen through the circles cut out of the artwork’s black canopy.
4. The proposed name complies with the City of Sydney naming policy. Specifically:
 - Principle 2: Uniqueness - duplication is avoided with other existing names in a 10-kilometre radius.
 - Principle 3: This name acknowledges the multicultural nature of our society. Inclusiveness and addressing the imbalance of previous approaches are significant priorities for new names.
 - Principle 4: New names using local Aboriginal language are encouraged, especially for parks and open spaces like this plaza, and shall be in the local Gadigal language.
 - Principle 6: Local or Cultural Relevance - the name has local relevance, reflecting the meaning behind a significant new Aboriginal artwork and the astronomical ideas that inspired it.
5. On 13 November 2024 the name was presented to the City’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Panel and they were supportive of the name.
6. On 15 November 2024 the name was approved by the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council.
7. Naming this plaza is important for wayfinding and access for emergency vehicles.
8. Community consultation was held between 14 July and 11 August 2025.
9. We received a total of 6 submissions during the consultation. 3 submissions were in favour of the name and 3 opposed the name.
10. The Sydney Your Say page was visited 120 times during the public exhibition period.

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 plaza 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 plaza will assist in wayfinding.
 - (c) Direction 8 - A thriving cultural life - supports recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage and history in public spaces and streets.

Organisational Impact

12. Naming the plaza will have minimal organisational impact. Signage will be installed once the name is gazetted.

Risks

13. There are no identified risks associated with the naming proposal.
14. This naming proposal is within the City's risk appetite:
 - (a) it helps to ensure public safety and meet community expectations by assisting with wayfinding, consistent with the City's encouragement of public spaces that prioritise health and safety, foster wellbeing and comply with applicable legislative and regulatory requirements.
 - (b) it ensures we comply with our legal and regulatory requirements.
 - (c) it supports the achievement of our strategic objectives.

Social / Cultural / Community

13. The name has local relevance, reflecting the heritage and history of people, events, and the community.

Financial Implications

14. There are sufficient funds available in the 2025/26 operational budget, for the installation of the street signage.

Relevant Legislation

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

Critical Dates / Time Frames

16. Should Council approve the name, a formal naming application will be submitted to the Geographical Names Board for consideration.

Public Consultation

17. Community consultation was held between 14 July and 11 August 2025.
18. The Sydney Your Say web page provided details of the plaza location, background for the origins of the name and a guide to pronunciation. A link to an online survey provided people with the opportunity to give their feedback. The page received 120 views during the consultation period.
19. On-street signage was erected around the plaza and a notification letter was delivered to 313 local residents and businesses (75-metre radius from the plaza).
20. We received a total of 6 submissions during the consultation. Three submissions were in favour of the name and 3 opposed the name.
21. A submission from Lendlease (Circular Quay) Trust was received stating that they are 'generally supportive of the proposed naming and raises no objections.' Lendlease (Circular Quay) Trust are the owners of buildings adjoining the plaza at 180 George Street.
22. The most common reasons given in support of the proposed name were:
 - (a) Supports Indigenous naming for Indigenous place (1 comment)
 - (b) Appropriately captures themes of artwork that frames the plaza (1 comment)
23. The most common reasons given in opposition to the name were:
 - (a) Objection to 'virtue signalling' and names should reflect the wishes of local residents (1 comment)
 - (b) Plaza should be named after 'white' heritage (1 comment)
 - (c) Concern name is difficult to pronounce (1 comment)

24. More information about the community engagement can be found at Attachment B - Community Engagement Report.
25. 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 may also notify the public through their website as part of their routine procedure for the naming of open spaces. If objections are raised, the proposal is returned to Council for further comment or amendment if required.

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