

University Naming and Memorial Policy changes – explanatory memorandum

Introduction

Our relationships with place names on our campuses evolve over time. It is important that we recognise and allow this evolution to occur, whilst maintaining a commitment to critical engagement with our history.

In 2023, the University established the Places Naming Advisory Group to develop principles for the future naming of buildings at the University, and protocols to guide the University's process for renaming buildings on campus.

The principles and protocols were developed and refined through extensive consultation in 2023 and early 2024, and it is now proposed that they be embedded in the University Naming and Memorial Policy.

This work has been informed by consultation with groups including:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Heritage Oversight Committee
- Traditional Owners Advisory Group
- Committee of Associate Deans and Delegates Indigenous
- University Executive
- Elected Student Representatives Committee

What are the proposed changes to the policy?

Principles for naming (section 4.1a, sections 4.4 – 4.13)

The proposed inclusion of guiding principles in the policy retains flexibility in naming approaches, consistent with policies of universities across Australia and the world, while recognising and addressing areas of particular risk.

It is proposed that the following principles are embedded in the policy, and that naming, or the affixing of memorials or signage under the policy must align with the principles (4.1a).

- 4.4 All buildings and rooms will be allocated a unique number for purposes of identification. This number is the default mechanism of identification for buildings that have not been given an additional name.
- 4.5 Buildings and places may have an additional name that is the primary nomenclature for identification and wayfinding.
- 4.6 Subject to the terms of any relevant lease, University property may be named to:
 - a) Recognise the land, traditions and heritage of the Traditional Owners upon which the University property is located;
 - b) Recognise the University's history, traditions and heritage;
 - c) Recognise a partnership or commercial arrangement;
 - d) Describe the location or activity occurring within the building;
 - e) Describe an architectural feature or concept associated with the building; and
 - f) In exceptional circumstances, recognise contributions (financial, service and otherwise) made to the University by donors, alumni, staff and our wider communities.
- 4.7 There may be circumstances where a name falls outside of these categories. Processes for approval of these names will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.8 Buildings and place names should have clarity and simplicity.
- 4.9 Building and place names are normally bestowed for a period of 25 years.

- 4.10 Where the name of a place is bestowed by Indigenous Elders in recognition of Country, the name can be enduring. It is recommended that enduring locations, features and landscapes, rather than built entities (which usually have a lifecycle), are named in recognition of Country.
- 4.11 Building and place names may be renewed (excepting those named in accordance with the clause above), particularly where they recognise the history or heritage of the University, or Indigenous cultural heritage.
- 4.12 In the rare circumstance that a building or place is named in recognition of a person or entity, names should:
- Meet the standards under section 4.1 and 4.2 of the existing policy;
 - Take into account the broader context and balance of existing place names on campus;
 - Be commensurate with the contribution of the person to the academy, to the University, to community or to society; and
 - In the case of a donor or benefactor, be commensurate with the financial contribution of the donor.

Guidance for renaming University property (sections 4.22, 4.23, 4.25, 4.26)

Currently, the policy provides limited guidance about renaming of University property. The following additions are proposed to allow naming to evolve over time, provide clarity about when and why renaming may occur, and enable ongoing critical engagement with our history.

- 4.22 The University reserves the right to review and rename buildings and places/University property at any time.
- 4.23 Contexts in which renaming may occur include:
- When a building or space is demolished or significantly redeveloped.
 - When a commercial contract or agreement associated with the name of a building or space ends.
 - When there is strong evidence that the retention of a name is inconsistent with the principles of Section 4.1 and/or the University's values and mission.
 - When a building passes the 25-year review point.
- 4.25 The University is committed to ensuring that history is not erased or distorted through decisions to retain or revoke and rename buildings and places. The University will approach all decisions in the spirit of critical engagement with the past and how our telling of history changes over time.
- 4.26 Where property or memorials are renamed an appropriate public acknowledgement should be made of the reasons for the change.

Other changes

A number of other changes are proposed, aligned with the proposed changes above:

- Objective: it is proposed that the policy should provide for affixing of signage to University property to detail the history of the land and building / place, reflecting the history of the University and how it has evolved over time.
- Scope: it is proposed that the naming of University property where the name is based on location or function should be in scope.

Feedback

Feedback on the proposed changes can be provided via this form:

<https://forms.office.com/r/dyhC323A5c>