

7.2.5 Official naming of Officer District Park

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Recommendation(s)

That Council

- Note the outcome of the community engagement undertaken in relation to determining the ultimate name for Officer District Park.
- Formally resolve to rename from the interim name of Officer District Park to Torongo Park.
- Submit the preferred name to Geographic Names Victoria for registration.

Attachments

Nil

Executive Summary

Officer District Park was always intended to be a working title to support the design phase of this project. Geographic Names Victoria and Council's Place Naming Policy strongly encourage the use of indigenous language when considering naming of local roads, features and localities. Accordingly, it was deemed appropriate to pursue a process to identify an indigenous name for this facility.

In collaboration with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation, 6 potential names were shortlisted for consideration and submitted to be voted on by the broader community. At the end of the associated community engagement period, it was apparent that the preferred name for Officer District Park is "Torongo" Park. Torongo means heart in Bunurong language.

Council is being asked to endorse the name "Torongo Park" as the name by which this reserve shall be known by hereafter.

Background

The subject site is currently referred to as "Officer District Park". This was always intended to be a working title to support the design phase of this project, not the ultimate name for the park.

The Cardinia Road Precinct Structure Plan (CRPSP) 2008 identified the subject site as land to be used for a district open space. Whilst the subject area of open space is titled "District Park" in the CRPSP, its role is more akin to present day regional parks. The role of a district park is defined in the PSP as "To serve the regional recreation needs of the community, serving a catchment area of 15,000 to 25,000 people".

A masterplan for Officer District Park was prepared between 2016 and 2018 and adopted by Council in December 2018. The detailed design process was then undertaken between 2020 and 2023 with a contract for the construction of Stage 1 being awarded in October 2023. The construction of stage 1 is expected to be completed in the next few months and the park open to the public later this year. It is intended to open the park under the new name and have all signage and associated publications leading up to the opening reflect this name.

There has been a thorough process undertaken to determine the preferred name. Geographic Names Victoria and Council's Place Naming Policy strongly encourage the use of indigenous

language when considering naming of local roads, features and localities. The decision to use an indigenous name was also influenced by the findings of the Cultural Heritage Management Plan prepared for the site and the geographic significance of the hilltop location. The park site slopes steeply to the north, south and west with a clear “look-out” point in the centre. This ridgeline extends east along Skyline Drive. This ridgeline is the last high point before the land levels out towards Western Port. For this reason, it would have been a significant lookout point for the Traditional Owners.

Following engagement and consultation with Koorie children from across the Shire at the Cardinia Koorie kids celebration day in September 2022, direct engagement with the Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) and the broader community, the preferred name and name which Council is being requested to endorse, is Torongo Park. Torongo means heart in Bunurong Language.

The process and outcome of the community engagement undertaken to determine the preferred name is outlined in the Consultation/Communication section of this report.

Policy Implications

The process Council has followed for determining the preferred name for this park conforms to the Naming Rules for Places in Victoria 2022 and is supported by Geographic Names Victoria. The names suggested, conform to principle C of the naming rules; Linking to place.

Relevance to Council Plan

1.1 We empower our communities to be healthy, connected and resilient

1.1.2 Enrich local identity and opportunities for the community to connect through art, history and cultural expression.

1.1.3 Lead by example in creating an inclusive and welcoming community for all by facilitating community education, capacity building, connection and celebration of our diversity.

2.1 We support the creation of liveable spaces and places

2.1.2 Plan and maintain safe, inclusive and connected open spaces, places and active travel routes.

4.1 We support our productive land and employment land to grow local industries

4.1.5 Strengthen and promote our shire's unique identity and visitor attractions.

5.1 We practise responsible leadership

5.1.1 Build trust through meaningful community engagement and transparent decision-making.

Climate Emergency Consideration

N/A

Consultation/Communication

As a culturally significant site, it was deemed appropriate and desirable for the ultimate name to incorporate Bunurong Language. As a first step in the process of developing a list of potential names for the park, the Parks Planning Team took up the opportunity to attend the Cardinia Koorie kids celebration day in September 2022 to engage with more than 200 Koorie students from 21 different local schools from across Cardinia Shire. As part of this day, students were invited to learn more about the cultural significance and history of the proposed Officer District Park site and what the plans were for its future.

The students were given a list of relevant words in Bunurong Language, along with the English translation which they could use for inspiration or suggest their own. These were then grouped to create a shortlist.

Council officers then contacted Bunurong Land Council Aboriginal Corporation (BLCAC) to seek their feedback on the suitability of the shortlisted names, confirm the language and meanings were correct, and to seek their endorsement of the use of the language for this purpose. As well as endorsing the list of names, BLCAC also confirmed that they were happy for the word “Park” or “Reserve” to be added onto the end of the language provided.

In-principle support was then sought from Geographic Names Victoria (GNV) to ensure all names being considered would be appropriate prior to inviting the broader community to vote for their preferred name. The names which were considered were:

Name	Translation
Kar Din Yarr	Look to the rising sun
Ngerwin	The Sun/sunshine/sunny
Djeembana	A place to meet
Karrbul Mile	High Hill
Karrbul Biik	High land (vantage point)
Torongo	Heart

A 4 week community engagement process was undertaken from 13th May – 10th June 2024 where the broader community was given an update on the progress of the project and asked to vote for their preferred name.

Community members were notified of the opportunity to vote via Council’s Creating Cardinia webpage, mail out (to owners and occupiers within the immediate surrounds of the park, which equated to 956 letters), social media posts, media releases, through the newsletters of the local schools, and through letters to local community groups.

Council officers also attended the National Reconciliation Week flag raising ceremony on 27th May, where community members could ask questions and vote in person for their preferred name. The name which received the most votes at this event was Torongo (37 of the 88 votes cast).

At the end of the engagement period there had been 3,864 views of the associated webpage and 667 online votes cast. Torongo received 251 online votes and again was the clear preference, as shown in Table 1 below.

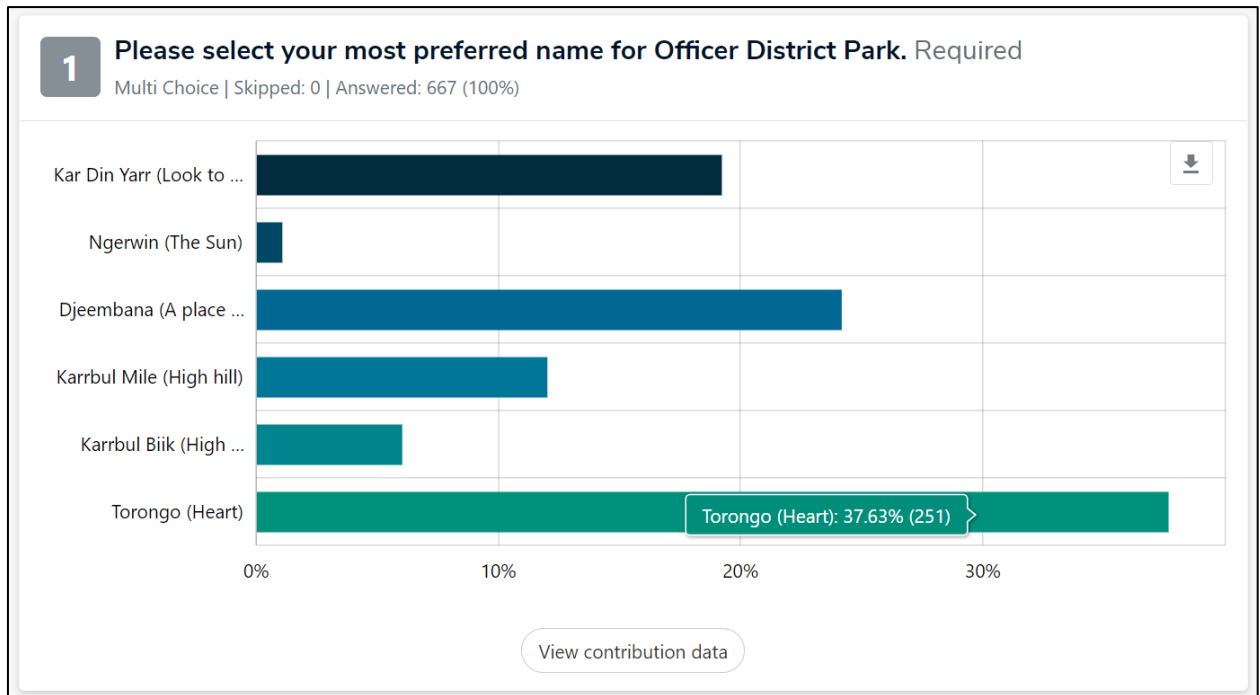


Table 1: Summary of online votes cast

Following Council endorsement of the preferred name, the name will be submitted to Geographic Names Victoria for formal registration and the community notified of the outcome. Pending Council endorsement, the park will hereafter be referred to and promoted as Torongo Park.

Financial and Resource Implications

All preparation and planning activities have been undertaken using existing internal resources at no additional cost to Council.

Conclusion

Following a thorough community and stakeholder engagement process the preferred name for Officer District Park has been determined to be Torongo Park. Subject to Council endorsement and registration with GNV, this name will be shared with the community and the site referred to as Torongo Park hereafter.