

ITEM 2

RECOGNISING OUR OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC ATHLETES INCLUDING EMMA MCKEON

A Lord Mayoral Minute was resolved unanimously on 2 August 2021 for Wollongong City Council to acknowledge and congratulate the Australian athletes at the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games for their dedication to achieve international competitive status.

This report responds to items 3 and 4 relating to recognition of Emma McKeon's achievements and creating an opportunity for the community to celebrate our local Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

RECOMMENDATION

Council determine the preferred option to acknowledge the achievements of Emma McKeon:

- Option A - Naming the North Beach Promenade and Terraces
- Option B - Naming the Cliff Road viewing platform overlooking the harbour and Continental Pools

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Sue Savage, Manager Community Cultural + Economic Development
Authorised by: Kerry Hunt, Director Community Services - Creative and Innovative City

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report.

BACKGROUND

A Lord Mayoral Minute was resolved unanimously on 2 August 2021 relating to recognition of Emma McKeon's achievements and Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic athletes.

This report responds to items 3 and 4.

- 3 *Council requests that by October 2021 the General Manager recommend possible options to recognise Emma McKeon and her achievements, such as the naming of a venue or location in the City and/or an update of the Olympic Wall of Honour in Lang Park. The community be invited to provide input and feedback on options to recognise Emma McKeon.*
- 4 *Wollongong City Council create an opportunity for Wollongong residents to acknowledge local athletes for their participation and achievements at the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic games at a suitable time yet to be determined.*

Recognising Emma McKeon and her Achievements

Local swimmer, Emma McKeon, represented Australia at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. She won seven medals, taking her Olympic medal tally to 11. This makes Emma the highest Olympic medal holder in Australian Olympic history.

The community was invited to provide ideas to recognise Emma McKeon through a two-phased engagement approach. In the initial phase, the community were invited to provide their ideas to recognise the achievements of Emma McKeon. Social media platforms, e-news, register of interest and direct email were used to promote the opportunity. The community could provide their ideas via social media, our online engagement platform, email or text message. Over 200 people participated by either providing ideas and comments or reacting with upvotes and likes.

The ideas provided included renaming Western Suburbs Pool, Continental Pools, Blue Mile/Belmore Basin or Allan's Creek, building an aquatic facility with an Olympic pool in Emma's honour or establishing a community fund or learn to swim program. Suggestions were also received proposing Emma be asked to contribute to suggestions.

A meeting was held with Emma and her family to discuss the proposed ideas and to understand Emma's preferences. Emma was honoured by the support she has received from the community and her

preference was to name a location along the Wollongong foreshore such as a viewing platform, small park or seating area.

Commercial conflict was raised as a concern in renaming an aquatic facility. The McKeon's operate a well-established swim school, from their own facility and under license at Western Suburbs Pool. Renaming an aquatic facility may cause ambiguity and it was highlighted that while the McKeon's currently are the licensee at Western Suburbs pool, this may not always be the case, resulting in another business indirectly operating under the name of McKeon's.

The McKeon's preference was naming a location along the Wollongong foreshore; a viewing platform, small park or seating area would be appropriate. A range of locations along the foreshore were investigated. Key considerations included: accessibility, funding constraints, sites without pre-existing names and Crown Land. Two options were deemed viable:

Option A - Naming the North Beach Promenade and Terraces – This project is currently under construction with Stage 1 completion due in mid-2022. Stage 1 lies in the area directly east of Diggies North Beach kiosk and north beyond the North Wollongong Surf Life Saving Club.

Option B - Naming the Cliff Road viewing platform overlooking the harbour and Continental Pool – The observation area was constructed around seven years ago and has excellent views across the Blue Mile Precinct.

In the second engagement phase the community was invited to provide local knowledge for consideration in the final decision. It was also an opportunity to gauge community sentiment. Social media, direct email and register of interest were used to promote the opportunity. Over 70 people provided feedback.

Feedback regarding Option A suggested the location provides a connection to Emma's love of the beach and water and has high visitation allowing greater exposure to Emma's achievements. It was suggested the location will be more accessible. Comments were also received suggesting the location should instead be used to honour someone involved with surf lifesaving or surfing.

Feedback regarding Option B suggested the location provides a space for people to meet, relax and read about Emma without distractions. It was suggested this reflects Emma's style, 'contemplative, serene and reflective'. It was also suggested naming may interfere with the cultural heritage linked to Cliff Road and the remnants underneath the viewing platform.

Based on feedback, advice was sought regarding the heritage of the Cliff Road viewing platform location. The viewing platform is in close proximity to the Wollongong Harbour Precinct State Heritage Listing. The site has existing heritage and the recommendations of the Blue Mile Interpretation Plan should be considered.

Olympic Wall of Honour

The inclusion of names on the Illawarra Olympic Wall is managed by the Illawarra Olympic Fundraising Committee. It includes names of athletes who have competed in the Olympics from the five local government areas that comprise the Illawarra. The committee has advised it is in the process of contacting all Illawarra athletes who participated in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics to seek their permission for inclusion on a tile to be placed in the wall.

Council suggested including the names of local Paralympic athletes on the wall to the Illawarra Olympic Fundraising Committee. The committee has indicated its support for the idea noting that the International Paralympic Committee is a different organisation to the International Olympic Committee and advising that management of this may be best managed by individuals with contacts in Paralympic sport. A process will be undertaken by Council staff to progress this initiative.

It is likely there will be an event to mark the handing over of the 'tile' with engraved names. Council staff will continue to liaise with representatives of the Illawarra Olympic Fundraising Committee to seek opportunity to work together on this.

Acknowledging Local Athletes

A range of options have been investigated however Covid-19 restrictions have limited the ability to provide an opportunity fitting for the occasion.

It is planned that Council include an activity in its Australia Day 2022 program of events to provide Wollongong residents with an opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of our local Olympians and Paralympians.

Council will also undertake digital recognition using its social media platforms across the coming weeks.

Council staff are working in partnership with the Illawarra Academy of Sport in developing these two projects.

PROPOSAL

Recognising Emma McKeon and her Achievements

It proposed Council determine the preferred option to acknowledge the achievements of Emma McKeon:

Option A Naming the North Beach Promenade and Terraces

Option B Naming the Cliff Road viewing platform overlooking the harbour and Continental Pools

Interpretative signage will be the preferred option and a communication plan delivered to promote the naming of the site.

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

A two-phased engagement approach was undertaken with the community to inform options to recognise Emma McKeon and her achievements.

Consultation was undertaken with Emma and her family to discuss the proposed ideas and understand Emma's preferences.

The proposed sites were determined in collaboration with Manager Property and Recreation and Recreation Services Manager.

Advice was sought from the Heritage Coordinator.

In terms of recognition, consultation has been had with representatives from the Illawarra Olympic Fundraising Committee.

Consultation was undertaken with Manager Library and Community Services regarding sourcing of Paralympic historical data.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2028 goal 2 "We have an innovative and sustainable economy". It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan Strategy	Delivery Program 2018-2022 4 Year Action	Operational Plan 2021-22 Annual Deliverables
4.2.3 Facilitate programs and events that support civic pride	4.2.3.1 Support a range of projects and programs in the city	Deliver civic activities which recognise and celebrate the city's people

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The installation of interpretative signage at the preferred site is anticipated to cost approximately \$20,000.

Inclusion of Paralympic athletes to the Olympic Wall and the Australia Day activity are expected to be managed within existing operational budget.

CONCLUSION

Tokyo Olympic and Para Olympic Games featured a range of dedicated athletes from our local community. Opportunities delivered will recognise our city's people and provide occasion for community to come together, acknowledge, reflect and celebrate.