



Australian Institute of
Landscape Architects

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NAIDOC WEEK

Opinion offered by the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) on the naming of Sydney's new hi-tech city at Bringelly, 'Bradfield'. NAIDOC WEEK 2021

B is for Bradfield: An A – Z of Sydney's Colonial Placenames.

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) notes that as of March 2021 the NSW Government plans to call Sydney's new 'hi-tech' city at Bringelly 'Bradfield', in honour of the engineer who helped shape Sydney. Based on a community consultation process the name Bradfield was a popular suggestion in the 'Name the Place' process and will now be put to the Geographical Names Board of NSW.ⁱ Of course, John Bradfield, a renowned engineer who significantly contributed to the construction of both the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney's original rail network, is a relevant and notable individual.ⁱⁱ He was a visionary, and with his team, helped Sydney grow and change. There is a logic to naming a new city after him. However, while we acknowledge the consultation measures in place, we are writing to express our disappointment in the decision to not prioritise an Australian Indigenous place name. We believe this action would have modelled for Sydney residents the 'action' called for by this year's National Reconciliation Week.ⁱⁱⁱ

In an analysis of Sydney suburb names from A-Z one only needs to travel a short way through the alphabet to understand the point being made by these name-choices, but here goes:

A is for Alexandria, honouring Princess Alexandria, wife of the Prince of Wales, later to become King Edward VII. **B** is for Balmain, surgeon of the First Fleet and 'first owner' of the land, who sold it for 5 shilling, 15 months after acquiring it. **C** is for Condell Park, named after engineer Ousley Condell who arrived in Port Jackson in 1829, a year later he received a land grant for what is now the suburb. **D** is for Dawes Point, amateur astronomer who arrived with the First Fleet and established an observatory. **E** is for Earlwood, commemorating Mrs Jane Earl, who 'owned' land here from 1883. **F** is for Flemington, taken from the name of the 'original' land grantee, John Fleming. **G** is for Georges Heights, the name of reigning King of England at the time, George III. **H** is for Harbord, named in honour of Cecilia Harbord, wife of the Governor of NSW at the time. **I** is for Ingleside, named after Dutch/ American Baron Von Beiren, an Industrial Chemist who owned property on the hillsides of Mona Vale. **J** is for Jamison, a First Fleeter who arrived as a surgeon's assistant and went on to become the Surgeon-General of NSW.^{iv} And the list goes on...

The remainder of the alphabet only reinforces this trend. Henceforth, we propose that the naming of Sydney's places has well and truly honoured the Bradfields' of this nation and indeed those of the British-run Commonwealth. While we are not suggesting a renaming, we are calling for a new approach in the face of new times for this country. Going forward, a continuation of this trend will not serve to highlight a wide range of interesting individuals and languages, across a spread of races and genders that have made up and will continue to make up our society. Nor does it amplify the voice of or reflect pride in the continent's First Peoples at a point where current research reveals the benefits of strengths-based approaches to Indigenous social inequity.

We believe that highlighting language or a significant historical First Nations individual or group would have better modelled prioritising social equity over perpetuating the colonial agenda. Focussing on empowerment, a promise to acknowledge the true and complex history of the nation, a history in which individuals of all races, culture and genders shine through. We encourage the readers of the SMH, the NSW Government and indeed all the individuals of NSW continue to push boundaries on where and how we can all do better, because this is one place we could have done better. Reconciliation takes action.^v And words, histories and names **do** matter.

Yours sincerely,

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects NSW

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Opinion on naming of 'Bradfield'

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Note: *The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) is the peak national body for the Landscape Architecture. The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) leads a dynamic and respected profession: creating great places to support healthy communities and a sustainable planet*

AILA champions quality design for public open spaces, stronger communities, and greater environmental stewardship. We provide our members with training, recognition, and a community of practice, to share knowledge, ideas and action. With our members, we anticipate and develop a leading position on issues of concern in landscape architecture. Alongside government and allied professions, we work to improve the design and planning of the natural and built environment.

ⁱ New City at Aerotropolis to be named Bradfield, accessed from <https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases/new-city-at-aerotropolis-to-be-named-bradfield>

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ National Reconciliation Week 2021 accessed from <https://nrw.reconciliation.org.au>

^{iv} Pocket Oz: Travel and Information Guide to Sydney, accessed from <http://www.visitsydneyaustralia.com.au/names-suburbs-hl.html>

^v Ibid. National Reconciliation Week