9.7 Naming of a park in Rylstone

REPORT BY THE PROPERTY SUPPORT OFFICER
TO 20 MAY 2020 ORDINARY MEETING
GOV4000087, PAR300020 P22086

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. receive the report by the Property Support Officer on the naming of a park in Rylstone;

2. Council support the name of Bill Staff Park.

Executive summary

Council received several submissions in memory of Bill Staff during a recent Bridge Naming process. While unsuccessful on that occasion, it was agreed to name a park in Rylstone in honour of Mr Staff. A public reserve between Louee Street and the Cudgegong River was chosen to be named.

Disclosure of Interest

Nil.

Detailed report

Several submissions were received in memory of Bill Staff during the recent Bridge Naming process for the bridge over the Cudgegong River in Rylstone. While unsuccessful on that occasion the submissions were considered very worthy and a location was sought to name a park in honour of Mr Staff.

A public reserve located between Louee Street and the Cudgegong River on Lots 9 & 10 Section 2B DP 758891 and Lots 7013 & 7014 DP 1023898 was selected at the 18 March 2020 Council Meeting.

The naming of a park must be open to public consultation and all submissions must be accepted, whether they be for the initiating name or not. Council advertised for naming submissions for the park in the 27 March 2020. Submissions closed on 17 April 2020 with no additional submissions received.

Bill Staff (1918-2010) had a passion for the people of Rylstone and was the author of six books about the small country town. He was born in Rylstone and attended Kandos High School, becoming dux of his year. He was then awarded a full academic scholarship to Armidale Teachers College. Mr Staff returned to his local area with his first teaching post in the village of Charbon in 1939. In 1942 he was transferred to Curryall Public School. In 1945 he was teaching at Yearin near Coonabarabran. It was there that he met Mary Redden who became his wife in 1953. Mr Staff would be survived by 5 children and 13 grandchildren. In 1952 Mr Staff returned to Rylstone and in 1958 became the principal of Kandos Primary School. In 1968 he became the
Principal of Rylstone Public school until retiring in 1981. Beyond his teaching work, Mr Staff loved the history of his local area. In 1963 he established the Rylstone District Historical Society, of which he served as President for 36 years. He also founded the local dramatic society and produced plays for his local community for 40 years. In 2002 Mr Staff was honoured with a Medal of the Order of Australia for his contributions to Rylstone. In 2007 the cross of Honour was bestowed upon him by the Pope. Mr Staff was a man of deep faith and a devout Catholic. He was educated in classical music, poetry and literature. He had a lifelong love of art from his time at Armidale. He was a gifted musician and teacher with a great sense of humour and an eclectic vernacular. He was truly a Renaissance Man.

The Geographical Names Board (GNB) is the naming authority for place names.

Council’s decision at this meeting will be submitted as our recommendation to the GNB for their next meeting along with our application to name the Park. The Geographical Names Board will then meet the cost of advertising in relation to this matter before making a final decision on the name for the Park. The GNB will also meet the costs of a Gazettal for the final park name.

Please note that, as this park area is a Crown Reserve, Council confirmed with Crown Lands that they have no issues with Council naming crown reserves so long as they are notified of the end result.

Community Plan implications

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Looking After Our Community</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Vibrant towns and villages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Respect and enhance the historic character of our Region and heritage value of our towns</td>
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Strategic implications

**Council Strategies**
Not applicable.

**Council Policies**
Road, Bridge and Place Naming Policy.

**Legislation**
Geographical Names Act, 1996
Geographical Names Board of NSW Policy – Place Naming, 2019

Financial implications

Cost of 1 sign at a total approximate cost of $360. This cost is included in the 2019/2020 Operational Plan.

**Associated Risks**
Nil.
30 April 2020

Attachments:
1. Submission.
2. Submission.
3. Submission.
4. Submission.
5. Submission.

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM
GENERAL MANAGER
The General Manager
Mid-Western Regional Council
PO Box 156
Mudgee
NSW 2850

Dear Sir

Thank you for the opportunity by expressions of interest for the naming of the bridge over the Cudgegong River in Rylstone.

The Rotary Club of Rylstone – Kandos after careful consideration at our recent meeting wish to submit the following three names for your consideration.

The Graham Wainwright Bridge or The Wainwright Bridge
Dependent on Council's deliberations - please see attached supporting documentation.

The Bill Staff Bridge
Please see attached supporting documentation.

Rotary Bridge
Supporting evidence:
- The Rotary Club of Rylstone – Kandos has served this Community continually for just over 75 years.
- The park adjacent to the bridge is Rotary Park – yet to be sign posted.
- The Rotary Club has invested over $10000 into seating, shade areas and plants within the adjacent park for community and travellers comfort.
- The Rotary Club represents the best interests of the community through support for local community events; sponsoring/supporting youth of the local area in various activities inclusive of NYSF, RYPEN, Youth Exchange, Honeywell Engineering School and financial support through scholarships; has an outstanding membership over the 75 years of local leaders within the community.
- At the conclusion of the 2021-22 financial year the Rotary Club of Rylstone-Kandos would have three of its members elected to the position of District Governor of Rotary District 9670 which covers the area from Newcastle to Murrurundi across to Rylstone/Mudgee/Wellington to Dubbo and Cobar/Bourke. This is a substantial contribution and commitment from such a small and dynamic club to substantiate the claim: Rotary – People of Action.

Please accept our recommendations for your consideration.

David Roach
Executive Secretary
The Rotary Club of Rylstone Kandos
Bill Staff (1918-2011)

Renaissance man’s love for small country town

Bill Staff had a lifelong passion for the people of Rylstone and published six books about the small country town.

He was a teacher but the endlessly energetic family man was also an admired historian, classically-trained musician, keen dramatist, mentor and generous community contributor.

William Francis Staff was born in Rylstone on February 6, 1918, the son of Frank Staff and his wife, Mary (nee Foodey). He was delivered in the bedroom of the family’s Mudgee Street home and was an only child, after his older sister, Mary, died in infancy.
The fifth generation Australian became vice-captain and dux of Kandos High School. He also represented the school in tennis. He was a keen learner and an avid reader from a young age and was awarded a full academic scholarship to Armidale Teachers College.

The college had an impressive collection of original artwork donated by the businessman Howard Hinton, which sparked Staff’s lifelong love of art. He also became infatuated with the extensive library and read obsessively.

His first teaching appointment was at Charbon, 10 minutes south of Rylstone, in 1939 and in 1942 he was transferred to Curryall Public School. It was at Yearinan near Coonabarabran, where he taught from 1945, that he met Mary Redden at a Catholic youth group. The two connected through a mutual love of poetry and married in 1953.

Staff had returned to Rylstone in 1952, and became principal of Kandos Primary School, which is just 7 kilometres out of town, where he taught from 1958. A decade later, he became principal at Rylstone Public School, where he remained until retiring in 1981.

Outside of his formal work, Staff avidly traced the history of his beloved community and in 1963 he established the Rylstone District Historical Society, of which he served as president for 36 years. He hand-wrote and published six books about the town.

He also founded the local dramatic society and produced plays for the locals for more than 40 years. Gilbert and Sullivan’s operettas were among his favourites. He was appointed to the St Vincent de Paul Society and spent decades on the Catholic parish and diocesan councils. In 2002, he was honoured with a Medal of the Order of Australia for his contribution to Rylstone.

Staff was a man of deep faith and a devout Catholic. He played the organ and led the choir at Sunday Mass at St Malachy’s Catholic Church, assuming the role from his mother when she died in 1952. Until entering an aged care facility in his later years, he claimed to have missed Sunday Mass only once in his life. His loyalty to the
faith and commitment to the local church was acknowledged in 2007 when he and Mary were awarded the Cross of Honour papal medals.

Staff was a Renaissance man, educated in classical music, poetry and literature. He was a gifted musician and could confidently deliver a tune on a flute, piano, guitar, accordion or almost any instrument. He taught music to local students and tutored piano until he was 85. He spread his love of poetry to anyone who would listen and many of his grandchildren can recite Banjo Paterson.

He also had a great sense of humour and many will remember his eclectic vernacular, which included the expressions “wacko” and “hokey smokes”.

Bill Staff is survived by Mary, children Conrad, Michael, Corinne, Genevieve and Fleur and 13 grandchildren.

Amy McNeilage
I am hoping I get this submission in by the close of today, however, I was not aware this was happening until just this minute when read our local community capers. While Mr Hawkins was a reputable member of our community, I would like to submit the name William (Bill) Staff Bridge or W F Staff Bridge.

The Staffs have lived in Rylstone for 4 generations, with Bill Staff having taught many local Rylstone Kandos residents starting at Charbon School, Kandos and ended up as principal of both Kandos and Rylstone public schools. As well as teaching in schools, he taught many locals going way back music in his home (one of the lovely stone buildings in Rylstone Mudgee Street). He worked hard to get grants for Rylstone Historical Society having been president for many years. He also was a founding member of the Rylstone Theatrical Society, now known as twin town players. Bill died at a young age in his mid 90s having been born and bred here in Rylstone.

Bill Staff is also the author of several history books noting the Rylstone area and the original families. You can talk to lots of people and many will recall Bill Staff as having taught them at school, having taught them how to play a musical instrument or just being an outstanding citizen in the Rylstone Community having lived just up the road from the Rylstone Bridge.

Regards

Roslyn Jeffrey
From: Conrad Staff
Date: 9 August 2019 at 8:56:33 pm AEST
To: Roslyn Jeffrey
Subject: Re: Urgent Submission re Naming of Rylstone Bridge

Congratulations Ros very succinct submission. I agree no comparison to other person than Dad. He was Mr Rylstone in every sense. It is a no brainer but politics always plays a part in these decisions. Recognised in Australian honours with his OAM and also by Mudgee Council as a resident of distinction in the shire. His photo is on the wall in the Mudgee library. Fingers crossed.

Conrad

Sent from my iPhone

On 9 Aug 2019, at 5:46 pm, Roslyn Jeffrey <

From: Conrad Staff
Sent: Tuesday, 13 August 2019 8:58 PM
To: Carolyn Atkins
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Submission re the naming of the bridge over the Cudgegong River at Rylstone

Dear Carolyn,
Thank you for your email. I was not aware of the invitation to the local community to suggest the names of persons who should be considered as appropriate to have the bridge named after them.
I, of course, am more than happy for my email to Roslyn to be included in the overall consideration of naming the bridge after my father. I thought it was appropriate to remind her that Dad had received an OAM and had his photo in the Mudgee library. I was unaware that she had forwarded her letter supporting my father to you which did not include this information.
Kind Regards
Conrad

Sent from my iPhone
Dear m/s Pringle,
I refer to your email dated 25 October 2019.
I would like to support the objection of Roslyn Jeffrey regarding the naming of the Rylstone Bridge by adding some specific details pertinent to William (Bill) Staff.
My father was born on 6th February 1918 at his parents' home at 40 Mudgee St, Rylstone. His grandfather George Conrad Staff settled in Rylstone in 1870.
I am the 6th generation to grow up at 40 Mudgee St. My father attended Kandos High School where he was Dux and Vice Captain.
He graduated from Armidale Teachers College in 1941. In 1952 he was appointed to Rylstone Public School. He spent the next 27 years teaching at either Rylstone or Kandos, the majority as principal.
In 1963 he established and remained president of the Rylstone Historical Society for 36 years until 2000 when he became its patron which he remained until his death in 2011. He presided over the purchase of the Bridge View Inn as the Society's headquarters. Much of the money raised to purchase the building was through barbecues, cake stalls and raffles which he organised. He wanted the Inn, one of the oldest buildings in Rylstone preserved for prosperity.
It remains owned by the Society up to today.
My father had a deep love of local history. This led him to publish 6 books on the local area. These included a history of the Rylstone Public School 1850 to 1994. The history of the Rylstone Railway 1884 to 1994 for its centenary.
His last book was a history of Rylstone published in 1999. It traces the history of Rylstone which was founded in 1820 over 320 pages with some 62 family trees of the original settlers and their descendants. This book of which he commissioned 500 copies sold out within a few months.
In the forward to the book Wal Pilz AO, OBE, a former director general of the Department of Public Works who, following retirement, returned to live in the local community, observed: "Bill Staff is undoubtedly the recognised custodian of the history of the district and is to be congratulated on this comprehensive chronicle of the times, events and people who made Rylstone district what it is today."
Bill had direct personal contact with generations of local residents as a teacher from 1940 to 1980.
The compilation of this book has been a monumental task requiring extensive correspondence and discussion with the descendants of early settlers, research of difficult to find records and co-ordinations it to produce this local history for future generations.
Locally he was known as "the Professor."
My father also founded the Dramatic Society and produced plays for the local community for over 40 years. He loved the works of Gilbert and Sullivan and produced "HMAS Pinafore", "The Micado" and "The Pirates of Penzance."
He also produced one act plays.
Following his mother's death in 1952 he assumed her role of playing the organ and leading each Sunday at church.
His community work also decades on the Parish and Diocesan Councils and the St Vincent de Paul Society. These and his other contributions resulted in My father being awarded an Order of Australia in the General Division in 2001. In 2007 he also received the Cross of Honour which is a medal bestowed by the Pope. It is a most distinguished honour with only 5500 recipients in Australia.
As you can appreciate my father made a lasting contribution to Rylstone. If you require a copy of The History of Rylstone I can provide it. Also if you have any questions I would be happy to answer them. The naming of the bridge after would be a fitting recognition of my father's contribution to the Rylstone community during his long life.
I thank you for considering this additional material and apologise that it was not provided earlier to you.
Yours sincerely
The Hon Conrad Staff
Park to be named