

26 October

Media Release

HAVE YOUR SAY ON PLACE NAMES IN LAKE MACQUARIE LGA

The Geographical Names Board (GNB) is seeking community feedback on a proposal by Lake Macquarie City Council (LMCC) to rename Coon Island to *Pirrita Island* and Coon Island Point to *Miners Point*.

Chair of the Geographical Names Board Narelle Underwood said the Board is encouraging community comment regarding the proposal to rename the features to *Pirrita Island* and *Miners Point*.

“It is important that place names reflect community sensitivities, which can change over time,” Mrs Underwood said.

“Names that could be considered offensive to individuals, or social, ethnic, religious and other groups are unacceptable, and we want to work with the community to address their concerns.

“We want to make sure everyone has an opportunity to provide their feedback on the proposed names.”

The proposal from LMCC to rename Coon Island and Coon Island Point, located at the head of the Swansea Channel, addresses concerns about the existing names being offensive.

Research undertaken by council in early 2021 confirmed that the island was named after mine worker Herbert Greta Heaney, who lived on the island and was nicknamed “Coon” Heaney.

Inspiration for the new names comes from the local area’s history and native environment.

Pirrita is a local Awabakal word for oysters from the mangrove tree. It signifies the oysters growing on the mangrove bushes in this part of the lake.

Miners Point recognises the mining families who lived on the island between 1915 and 1974.

“Through place naming, communities have the opportunity to unlock past stories, preserve traditions, reawaken language and provide a sense of belonging and identity,” Mrs Underwood said.

GNB is seeking feedback to gauge community sentiment for the proposed names. Suggestions for alternative names is not being sought at this time.

All submissions received will be reviewed and considered by GNB. If the proposals are rejected, GNB will work with LMCC to find suitable alternatives.

Details of the proposal can be viewed, and submissions lodged on the GNB's [website](#).

Alternatively, written submissions may be mailed to the Secretary, Geographical Names Board, 346 Panorama Ave, Bathurst, NSW 2795.

The closing date for submissions is 17 November 2021.