

10.6. Edward and Union Precinct Committee Merger

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. Euroka Precinct Map [10.6.1 - 1 page]

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the merger of the Edward and Union Precinct Committees (now known as Euroka Precinct), and to detail other potential mergers currently under consideration.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

On 25 July 2022, the Council resolved (in part):

3. THAT Council recognises the following:

(a) The principle that the question of mergers or amalgamations between Precincts or their dissolution are matters for the Precincts themselves to determine

(b) That Council will provide administrative support for any such mergers, amalgamations or dissolutions.

In accordance with the above resolution, Council has provided administrative support and guidance regarding the merger of Edward and Union Precinct Committees. Euroka Precinct is the name of the new entity. Its first meeting was held 1 February 2023, at which office bearers were elected.

In April 2022, Edward and Union Precinct Committees proposed a trial merger citing:

- common interests;
- low attendance at both Committees' meetings; and
- difficulties finding voluntary office bearers.

The trial merger commenced in May 2022, with joint Committee meetings held monthly until December 2022. During this period the proposed merger was listed on each agenda. Meeting flyer invites were distributed to all households within the Precinct areas, as were email invites to their member email groups. This ensured widespread awareness of the proposal.

In December 2022 the two Committees formally resolved to merge into one Precinct area.

This report also details the procedure established to guide other Precinct Committees considering amalgamation with an adjacent inactive Precinct area, and advises of the other

potential mergers and reactivations with which Council staff are currently assisting. Further updates will be provided to Council in due course.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Operational funding is under review, with any changes effective 1 July 2023.

As part of the Precinct System Review, the amount of funding per Committee will be reviewed, taking into consideration the needs of larger sized Precinct areas such as increased quantity in flyer delivery.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT Council note the amalgamation of Edward and Union Precincts to form one precinct known as 'Euroka Precinct'.

LINK TO COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The relationship with the Community Strategic Plan is as follows:

5. Our Civic Leadership

5.3 Community is engaged in what Council does

BACKGROUND

There are currently 25 Precinct areas with eight Committees inactive. The inactive committees are Anderson, Bradfield, Bridgeview, CBD, Hayes, Kurraba, and The Plateau.

The most recent boundary change/merger occurred in 1998 with the merger of Wollstonecraft and Nicholson Precinct areas into the current Wollstonecraft Precinct area, which roughly aligns the suburb boundaries of Wollstonecraft. In June 1998, Council resolved to endorse the conduct of public consultation to gauge community interest in, and support for, the amalgamation of Nicholson and Wollstonecraft Precincts. Following consultation led by Council on 6 October 1998, Council resolved to endorse the amalgamation.

The proposed recommendations of the Precinct System Review were considered by Council at its meeting of 25 July 2022. Council resolved that the question of mergers or amalgamations is a matter for the Precincts themselves to determine.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

Community engagement is not required. Consultation has occurred within the Edward and Union Precinct areas as outlined in this report.

DETAIL

In accordance with the Council resolution of 25 July 2022, staff provided administrative support and guidance for the formal Edward/Union Precinct Committee merger.

In April 2022, Edward and Union Precinct Committees proposed a trial merger. Joint committee meetings were held monthly from May 2022 to December 2022 and the proposed merger was listed on each agenda. In addition, meeting flyer invites (distributed to all households in the Precinct area/s and email invites to their respective member email groups were distributed, ensuring widespread awareness of the proposal.

In December 2022, the two Precinct Committees formally resolved to merge. An Annual General Meeting was held 1 February 2023, at which office bearers of the new Precinct Committee, known as Euroka Precinct Committee (map attached) were elected.

The new Precinct name was determined in consultation with Council's Historian. A map of St Leonards from 1887 shows the Euroka Estate owned and subdivided by EM Sayers in the 1860s. The Dibbs family subsequently bought the house and grounds of the estate, Graythwaite. The history of Euroka Estate can be found at <https://www.athomeinnorthsydney.com.au/graythwaite.html>.

Post-amalgamation administration is in progress, including:

- set up of a webpage on Council's new Council;
- updating Council's name and address register (NAR);
- adding as a new customer in Council's record keeping system; and
- updating of the Precincts area map.

Operational funding is also under review, with any changes to be effective from 1 July 2023. The two former Precinct Committees have sufficient funds for the remainder of the financial year, and Council can provide additional assistance should it be required, in accordance with the current Guidelines.

This is the first merger to have progressed following Council's resolution of 25 July 2022. A procedure has been established to guide other Precinct Committees considering amalgamation with an adjacent inactive Precinct area.

The following process has been documented:

1. Initial discussion with Council staff.
2. Merger proposal listed for discussion on the next Precinct meeting agenda.
3. Councillor Bulletin item prepared (for information).
4. Consultation to occur with the inactive Precinct area to gauge community interest in, and support for, the proposed change. Allow minimum 42 days duration for feedback. Council staff can convene a community meeting during this period, providing the opportunity to discuss merger or reactivation of Precinct area.
5. Discussion to occur with Council's Historian regarding a suitable new name for the Precinct area. This process takes 2 to 4 weeks, to allow sufficient time for research to be undertaken.
6. If there is community interest for the amalgamation of the two Precinct areas, the merger proposal is listed on the active Precinct Committee's next meeting agenda with a proposed motion to proceed and the suggested new name. A statement of income and expenditure (to be resolved within a motion to proceed with the merger, if carried) is finalised.
7. Flyers distributed in both Precinct areas advising of the first meeting of the new Precinct area at which office bearers are to be elected. Interim office bearers can be appointed.
8. Council report prepared, advising of the merger.
9. Council administration tasks undertaken.

This merger brings the total number of Precinct areas to 24, with eight Committees remaining inactive - Anderson, Bradfield, Bridgeview, CBD, Hayes, Kurraba, and The Plateau.

At the time of preparing this report, Council is supporting the following Precinct Committees regarding potential changes:

Precinct/s	Change considered
Harrison/Bennett (Potential merger)	Committees temporarily merged in August 2020, with Harrison Precinct opening its meetings to both Precinct areas. Bennett Precinct has been inactive since mid-2020 due to a lack of office bearers. Consultation is currently underway regarding whether to proceed with a formal merger.
Bay/The Plateau (Potential merger)	Bay Precinct proposed a merger with the inactive The Plateau Precinct area in late 2022. Bay Precinct led consultation with both Precinct areas to gauge community interest in, and support for, the amalgamation of the two Precincts or the reactivation of The Plateau Precinct Committee.
Registry/Bridgeview (Potential merger)	Registry Precinct has enquired about a potential merger with the inactive Bridgeview Precinct area.
Cremorne (Reactivation)	Cremorne Point Precinct is currently in temporary recess due to a lack of office bearers. Staff will coordinate a flyer to be distributed in the Precinct area, promoting the Precinct Committee and calling for office bearer expressions of interest, to be discussed at a community meeting in late March 2023 (same format as the first meeting held when proposing reactivation of a long-time inactive Precinct).
Hayes and Kurraba (Reactivation)	Staff are in conversation with interested community members regarding the possible reactivation of Hayes and Kurraba Precinct Committees. It is noted that for many years, Neutral Precinct has been opening its meetings to both Hayes and Kurraba Precinct areas, periodically distributing flyer invites when development proposals or other matters in these Precinct areas are listed on their agenda.

