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7 September 2025

The General Manager
Strathfield Council
PO Box 120
STRATHFIELD NSW 2135

Re: Objection to proposed renaming of parts of Homebush to Strathfield

On behalf of the Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society, I wish to formally object to the proposal to rename part of the suburb of Homebush as Strathfield.

The Society is a community-based, incorporated organisation dedicated to conserving, protecting, and promoting the history and heritage of the Strathfield–Homebush district.

We request in future that the Society is consulted as a stakeholder where there are proposals concerning history or heritage.

Homebush is one of Sydney's oldest suburb names, dating back to the early 19th century, and has been part of the Strathfield Municipality since its incorporation in 1885. Removing or replacing this name would blur the historic and geographic distinction between neighbouring suburbs and risk erasing an important part of Sydney's heritage.

Council's notification does not provide background studies, costings, or a balanced analysis of the proposal's impacts. Further, the notification information appears to assume that the impacts are wholly positive, despite clear and significant consequences for community identity, local institutions, and heritage.

Claims of "confusion" regarding location are not substantiated. On the contrary, renaming an area serviced by Homebush Railway Station and containing long-established institutions such as Homebush Public School, Homebush Boys High School, Homebush Village Shopping Centre and Homebush Post Office as Strathfield would increase confusion for residents, businesses, and visitors.

If clarity of location is the actual concern, a more obvious issue is the shared postcode (2140) for the distinct suburbs of Homebush and Homebush West. This anomaly regularly causes misreporting in postal, demographic, and statistical records and is more deserving of

correction. Council could also consider restoring Flemington as the suburb name of Homebush West, which would provide greater differentiation with the suburb of Homebush.

The Society has no objection to the inclusion of the isolated property 'Strathbelle' on Beresford Road (which does not contain an address on the notification) being included in the suburb of Strathfield which is consistent with other properties in this street location.

For these reasons, the Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society strongly opposes the proposed renaming of Homebush and urges Council to withdraw the proposal.

Yours faithfully

Michael Nicholls
President
Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society



Submission on Proposed Renaming of Homebush to Strathfield

September 2025

On behalf of the Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society, I write to provide comments on the proposal to rename parts of the suburb of Homebush as Strathfield, as notified on the Council website.

The Strathfield-Homebush District Historical Society is incorporated under the *Incorporation Act (NSW)*. The Society is a community-based organisation dedicated to conserving, protecting, and promoting the history and heritage of the Strathfield–Homebush district.

Expanding the boundaries of “Strathfield” by effectively abolishing part of Homebush, an original suburb within Strathfield Municipality since its incorporation in 1885, would blur historic and geographic distinctions between neighbouring suburbs and risk erasing a long-established name of substantial history and heritage.

The Municipality of Strathfield was established from the actions of groups of landowners of the suburbs of Homebush, Redmyre and Druit Town who petitioned the Colonial Governor of NSW from 1884 to establish municipal government. The Municipality of Strathfield was incorporated on 2 June 1885 and covered the areas of Redmyre (which then adopted the suburb name of Strathfield), Homebush and Druit Town. It should be noted that Strathfield was not an original locality name, it was adopted for the new Council and was named after a local house.

The Council’s notification does not provide background studies, reports, or costings to support this proposal. Nor does it contain a balanced assessment of its advantages and disadvantages. In the absence of such analysis, the proposal seems to assume that the impacts are wholly positive, despite clear and significant consequences for community identity, local institutions, and heritage.

It is important to distinguish between municipalities and suburbs. A municipality is the governing body for a geographic area comprising towns and suburbs. Suburbs, particularly in metropolitan areas, rarely align neatly with municipal boundaries. For example, parts of Strathfield are located in Burwood LGA, while parts of Greenacre fall within both Strathfield LGA and Canterbury–Bankstown LGA. Municipalities can be abolished, merged, or renamed under the *Local Government Act* without altering the historic or geographic boundaries of their constituent suburbs.

The naming of Council-owned facilities in Homebush, such as Strathfield Library and Strathfield Community Centre, relates to their ownership by Strathfield Council, not their

location within the suburb of Strathfield. If this naming causes confusion, a far simpler and less disruptive solution would be to adjust the facility names (e.g. Strathfield Council Library), as occurs in other LGAs. For example, Woollahra Library is located in Double Bay without prompting attempts to rename that suburb.

The Council's stated justification of "confusion" is not substantiated and no examples of such confusion have been provided. On the contrary, renaming an area serviced by Homebush Railway Station and containing well-established institutions such as Homebush Village Shopping Centre, Homebush Public School, Homebush Boys High School, and Homebush Post Office as Strathfield would create, rather than resolve, confusion in navigation, identity, and service delivery.

A more pressing and genuine source of community confusion is the shared postcode (2140) between the distinct suburbs of Homebush and Homebush West. This anomaly leads to both areas frequently being reported as one, affecting demographic analysis, postal delivery, and statistical reporting (e.g. population, crime, housing). If clarity and accuracy are truly the objectives, this issue deserves far greater attention than renaming long-established suburbs.

Another naming issue worthy of investigation is the questionable adoption of the contrived suburb name of Homebush West with its lack of connection with its railway station, Flemington, and its own historical development. This area has been renamed in several occasions including at one time, parts being named Strathfield West. A proposal that may again resurface, if parts of Homebush are renamed Strathfield.

Renaming a suburb involves significant practical costs, from updating signage, maps, and government records to requiring businesses, schools, and households to amend their documentation and communications. These resources could be better directed towards improving community facilities and infrastructure.

In summary, this proposal lacks evidence, undermines local history, and risks damaging the strong community identity associated with Homebush. The Council should withdraw the proposal and instead focus on practical measures that genuinely improve clarity without erasing its history and heritage.

Response to Council's 'rationale'

Rationale: "To reduce address confusion and improve navigation."

Response:

Renaming Homebush as Strathfield will not reduce confusion; it will increase it. The proposed area lies immediately adjacent to Homebush Railway Station and contains long-established institutions clearly identified with the name Homebush, including Homebush Village Shopping Centre, Homebush Public School, Homebush Boys High School, and Homebush Post Office.

If the change proceeds, the area south of Homebush Station would fall within Strathfield, despite the fact that Strathfield Station and Strathfield Town Centre are located nearby in a different area. This would create a situation where two separate shopping and town centres

exist within the suburb of Strathfield, each served by different railway stations, increasing confusion rather than resolving it.

If schools and businesses retain their established Homebush names while being relocated into Strathfield, the renaming of the suburb would cause a disconnect. Conversely, if they were forced to change names as their establishment or trading name is inconsistent with the suburb, they would suffer a significant loss of identity, heritage, and recognition built over generations.

Rationale: "To align suburb names with community identity and infrastructure."

Response:

Homebush is one of Sydney's oldest suburb names, dating back to the early 19th century, while Strathfield was only adopted in 1885 as the name of the new Council. The suburb of Strathfield was formerly called Redmyre (or Redmire). Erasing the name Homebush would diminish recognition of its historic origins and erase an important marker of Sydney's settlement history.

Homebush is not simply an extension of Strathfield. It has its own clearly established identity, with distinct schools, transport hubs, shopping precincts, and services that reinforce its place as a separate community. Replacing its name with Strathfield ignores the depth of local identity and undermines the unique heritage of Homebush.

Rationale: "To follow clear, easily understood boundary lines."

Response:

The proposed boundaries would not create clarity. Instead, they would introduce inconsistency and confusion. For example:

- The southern entrance to Homebush Railway Station would be placed within Strathfield, despite the existence of another station already named Strathfield within the suburb of Strathfield.
- The Homebush Shopping Centre would be reclassified as Strathfield, causing confusion with the existing Strathfield Shopping Centre near Strathfield Station.
- Homebush West would no longer be located west of Homebush but west of Strathfield, rendering the name misleading.
- Part of a street (Hampstead Road) in Homebush West is located in Strathfield in this proposal, while the rest of the street would remain Homebush West, creating a patchwork of inconsistent addresses.
- The western boundary follows the edge of a park backing onto residential properties is not a clear or significant landmark boundary.

Far from clarifying boundaries, the proposed changes blur historic and geographic distinctions, erode heritage, and impose unnecessary confusion.

Comparison with Belfield

In 2023, the section of Belfield located within the Strathfield Local Government Area was renamed Strathfield South. While this precedent may be cited in support of renaming parts of Homebush, the circumstances are fundamentally different.

Belfield was divided between two LGAs, whereas Homebush lies entirely within the Strathfield LGA. The portion of Belfield subject to renaming contained no schools, institutions, or other facilities identified with the Belfield name. Consequently, the impact of that decision was minimal and did not generate confusion about place identity.

By contrast, Homebush carries a long and well-established history, integral to the heritage and identity of the local community. Belfield, in comparison, was historically known as Enfield for much of its existence, and the origins of the name Belfield are less clear and less widely embedded in community consciousness.

The proposed renaming of Homebush cannot therefore be equated with the Belfield example. Unlike Belfield, Homebush has strong historic recognition, community attachment, and cultural significance, making any change disruptive, unnecessary, and potentially confusing.

Suburb history and the 'Village of Homebush' estate

The majority of the area of Homebush identified in the proposal located south of the railway is situated on land originally granted in 1793 by the NSW Colonial Government to a group of free settlers, including Frederick Meredith, Edward Powell, Thomas Rose and Thomas Webb. These lands, which after changes of ownership and consolidation, were subdivided in 1878 as the 'Village of Homebush'. An area, on the western border of the 'Village of Homebush' that includes Airey Park, is a portion of the 1841 Joseph Hyde Potts land grant, which commenced subdivision as the 1881 Potts Estate. The western boundary of the proposed site includes land on Hampstead Road in Homebush West (Flemington), which is a portion of the John Fleming grant of 1806, later part of the 1882 Underwood Estate.

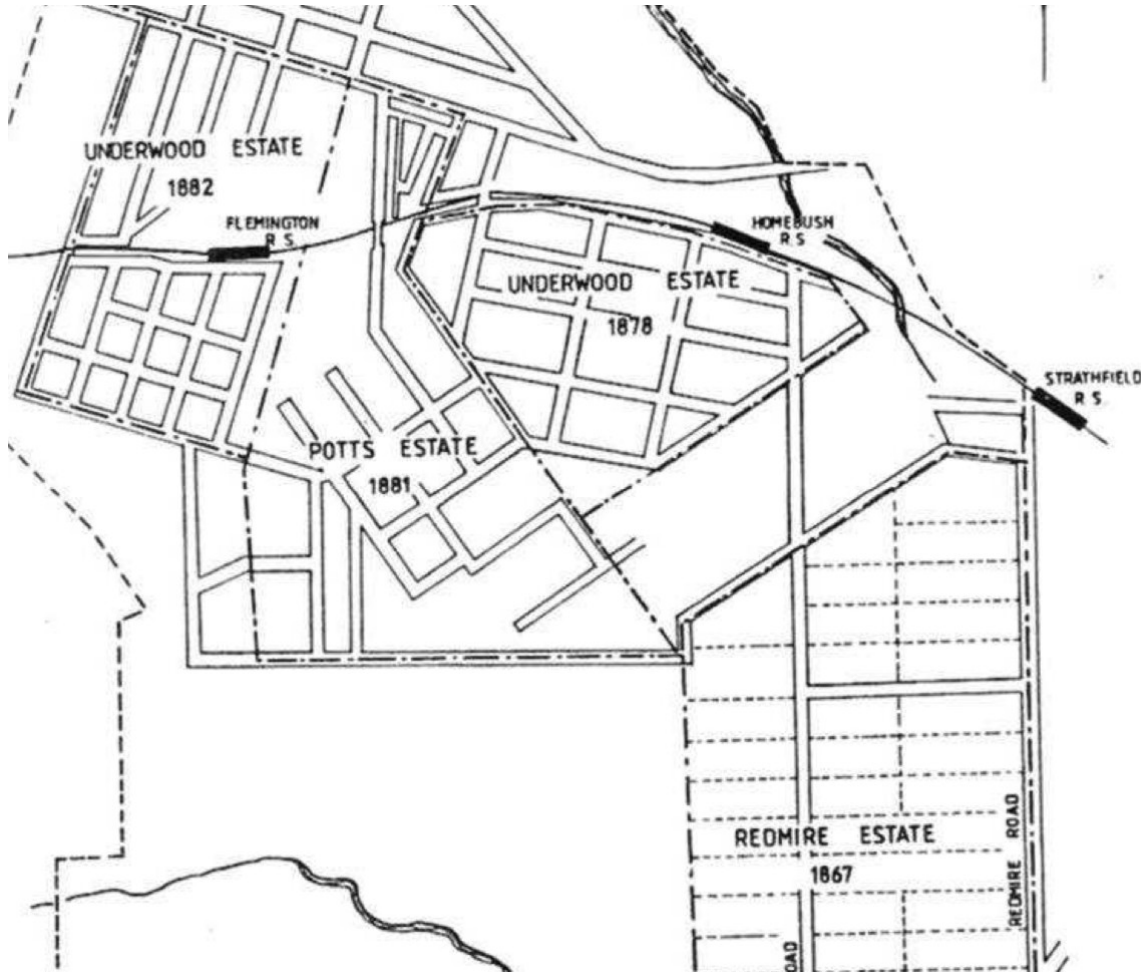


Image: Historic Land map, Fox & Associates, Strathfield Heritage Study, 1986.

Village of Homebush estate

The intention of the 1793 land grants to free settlers was to establish farms and food supply for the growing Sydney settlement colony. The land proved difficult to farm and the settlers abandoned farming activity. While some retained an interest in their farms, they obtained employment elsewhere such as Edward Powell who entered the Public Service as a constable at the Hawkesbury River. Mrs. Thomas Webb, whose husband had died in 1795, abandoned her right to her husband's land. The Webb and Powell grants ultimately became the property of merchant Simeon Lord whose name appears on the official maps as grantee of the combined areas of 160 acres in 1803.

Eventually, this land and other land located in the current day Homebush West and Homebush (both sides of the railway line) came under the ownership of James Underwood, Edward Powell's son-in-law. The land became known as the 'Underwood Estate'.

In 1855, Sydney's first passenger railway line opened on September 26, a 22km "Great Trunk Line" from the Sydney terminus (south of present-day Central Station) to Parramatta Junction (near Granville Station). This line served intermediate stations at Newtown,

Ashfield, Burwood, and Homebush. The railway line passed through the Underwood land. Though a railway halt and later a rail station was established at Homebush in 1855, there is little evidence of development on the south side of the Homebush Railway until the subdivision of the 'Village of Homebush' in 1878.

The James Wilshire land grant of 1810 covers a large portion of the current suburbs of Strathfield and Strathfield South. This land grant was known as a Redmire Estate. The 'Redmire Estate' commenced residential subdivision in 1867. The suburb of Strathfield was originally known as Redmire (later spelt Redmyre). By the late 1870s, large homes for wealthy merchants and businessmen were being built in Redmyre. In 1877, a rail halt and later a station was established at Redmire, that increased residential development.

In 1878 a large section of the 'Underwood Estate' known as the 'Village of Homebush' was subdivided and offered for sale. 'The Village of Homebush' estate measured 306 acres. It is located south of the railway line and forms a large portion of the suburb of Homebush.

The Sydney Morning Herald of November 2, 1878, described the subdivision as '... a portion of the estate close to the railway station has been laid out as the 'Village of Homebush'.

James Underwood was the son-in-law of Edward Powell, an early land grantee in the Strathfield-Homebush district, who acquired significant land holdings in various areas of Sydney before his death in 1844. The NSW Parliament passed *Underwood's Estate Act Amendment Act* (1874) which amended the earlier *Underwood's Estate Act* (1873). The legislation concerned the administration and appointment of trustees to sell land and management the estates of the late James Underwood. The Trustees of the Underwood Estate involved with the subdivision of the Homebush estates included William George Pennington, William Henry Mackenzie Snr, John Piper Mackenzie, Robert John King, and Charles Wye Weekes.

THE UNDERWOOD ESTATE, HOMEBUSH,

TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION BY

RICHARDSON & WRENCH,

At the Rooms,
PITT STREET,
ON
MONDAY, DECEMBER 9
1878.

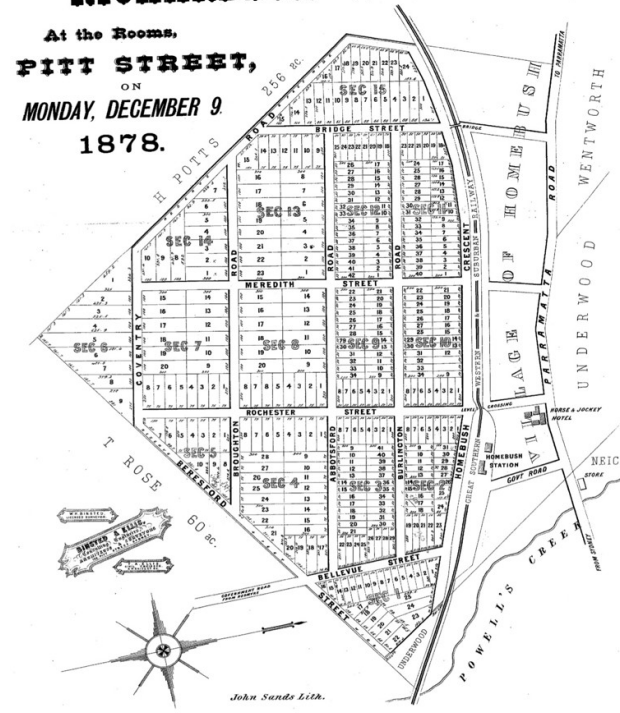


Image: Village of Homebush Estate map 1878

The estate was allotted into 15 sections, intersected by streets, with names almost identical with those in use to-day, which included Burlington Rd, Beresford Road, Abbotsford Rd, Bridge St, Coventry Rd, Meredith St, Homebush Crescent and Bellevue Street. Parts of Coventry Road have since been renamed. In July 1918, the section of Coventry Road from Elsie Street (now Shortland Avenue) to The Crescent was renamed Mackenzie Street. Bellevue Street was renamed Homebush Road and Homebush Crescent was renamed The Crescent.

The Potts Estate and Fleming Grant

Parts of the suburb of Homebush which is proposed to be renamed Strathfield are located within the 1841 Potts estate and the 1806 Fleming Grant.

Land located west of the 'Village of Homebush' was granted in 1841 to Joseph Hyde Potts, measuring 256 acres (103 hectares). Potts was first secretary of the Bank of New South Wales (later Westpac Bank) and a prominent landowner in Sydney, owning land on which suburbs such as Potts Point and Potts Hill are built. The Potts land at Homebush was

bounded at north by the railway (built 1855), at east by the 1806 John Fleming land grant (later Underwood Estate and now suburb of Homebush West) and at south Barker Road, the dividing boundary of the Potts and 1841 Newton land grants.

The Potts Estate land lay undeveloped for many years due to legal restrictions over use of land. The land commenced subdivision in 1881, following legislation that permitted the trustees to sell the land.

In 1806, John Fleming received a large land grant, located west of the Potts estate. This area later became Flemington (Homebush West) and contains part of the suburb that is included in the map of the proposed Strathfield area eg Hampstead Road.

By 1882, this land had passed into ownership of the Underwood Estate, which was then surveyed and subdivided and offered for sale. Part of the Underwood land was dedicated to the establishment of the Flemington railway station, and south of the station became the Homebush stockyards, now the site of Sydney Markets.

Development of Homebush infrastructure and services

Much of Homebush's infrastructure and services have been established for over 100 years and are clearly identified as Homebush locations.

Homebush railway station was one of the first railway stations in Sydney and opened in 1855. In 1885, Homebush Public School, on Rochester Street Homebush opened. In 1936, Homebush Boys High on Bridge Road Homebush opened.

Shops commenced building from the late 1880s near Homebush Rail Station on The Crescent and Rochester Street, Homebush. Over time, a shopping centre developed, initially in wooden structures. From the 1910s, new brick structures, usually 2 storey with a ground floor shop and 1st floor residence began to replace the older wooden shops. By the late 1920s, a shopping centre featuring a mix of Federation and some interwar style shops were built on the Crescent, Rochester Street and Burlington Road Homebush providing a wide range of goods and services for the local community.

An early postal and telegraph office was established at Homebush. A large post office was built in 1895 on the Crescent to provide postal services for the suburb of Homebush South. The Homebush South post office is now located on Rochester Street.

The Strathfield shopping centre also developed near the Strathfield Rail station. The Strathfield Town Centre is a much larger centre than Homebush with shops and services as well as a shopping mall, Strathfield Plaza, and commercial office space.