



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMY AND GENDER AND ECONOMIC EQUALITY
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Submission Cover sheet

Inquiry into memorialisation through
public commemoration

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Manager of Government Business
Minister for Planning and Land Management
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21/554

Leanne Castley MLA

Chair
Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality
By Email: LACommitteeEGEE@parliament.act.gov.au

Dear Chair *Leanne*

I am pleased to enclose below the ACT Government's submission to the Standing Committee's Inquiry into memorialisation through public commemoration.

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this important Inquiry.

Yours sincerely


Mick Gentleman MLA

11/4/2021

The promotion of equality and diversity in the people recognised through public commemoration (places, monuments, streets, and suburbs) in the ACT

The ACT Place Names Advisory Committee (the Place Names Committee) provides advice to me about the naming of divisions (suburbs), public places and the commemoration of eminent Australians under the provisions of the *Public Place Names Act 1989* (the Act). The Place Name Committee supports the ACT Government's commitment to promote equality and diversity in the people recognised through public commemoration which aligns with a range of commitments with respect to LGBTIQ+ inclusion and visibility. It is central to the Committee's work that it continues to provide recommendations for new place names largely according to the significance of each nominee's particular contribution.

The Place Names Committee provides advice to me about nomenclature themes for new suburbs to make sure there is scope to recognise women and diversity. The community is encouraged to suggest ideas for new themes.

The suburbs of Bonner and Nicholls commemorate the significant contribution of First Nations leaders, Neville Bonner AO and Sir Douglas Nicholls CVO OBE KSTJ. The roads in Bonner recognise the names of Indigenous leaders and their supporters.

There are opportunities to publicly recognise a personal name in the ACT in addition to place names and statues, including the naming of government schools and awards. The Minister for Education may name a government school, or a school-related institution, under the *Education Act 2004*. The ACT Honour Walk provides opportunities every two years to publicly recognise outstanding contributions by individuals and groups. There is also the ACT Women's Awards, ACT Australian of the Year Awards, ACT Citizen of the Year Awards and ACT Scientist of the Year. The Roadside and Urban Open Space Memorials Policy provides guidance on the management of roadside and open space memorials placed on public lands and there are Canberra Tracks signs which focus on women, First Nations people and cultural diversity.

The Office of LGBTIQ+ Affairs is also available to assist the Standing Committee on the use of relevant language and terminology concerning the promotion of equality and diversity in the people recognised through public commemoration.

The prominence of women and non-binary people in place naming conventions across the ACT

The Place Names Committee and the ACT Place Names Unit research opportunities to commemorate women and diversity in place naming. Personal names are considered in accordance with the provisions of the legislation which includes criteria to consider the person's contribution and a requirement that the person must be deceased. There can be a delay if a suitable naming opportunity cannot be identified which satisfies the *Public Place Names (Naming of public places) Guidelines 2021*, including the Australian and New Zealand Rural and Urban Addressing Standard.

There are twelve suburbs across the ACT named to commemorate notable Australian women including Franklin, Stella Miles Franklin – writer; Taylor, Florence Taylor – architect; Macnamara, Dame Jean Macnamara – scientific and medical research; and Wright, Judith Wright – writer, poet and conservationist.

The Minister for Planning and Land Management has asked the Place Names Committee to review the naming of existing suburbs to investigate opportunities to co-name a suburb to recognise other eminent people (deceased) who bear the same family name. Subject to further consideration, the suburb of Spence may offer an opportunity to recognise Catherine Helen Spence (1825–1910). If the name of a significant woman, or person representing diversity, cannot be commemorated as a suburb name, or street address, there can be opportunities to honour their achievements through the naming of a park or other public space. Examples include Rosemary Dobson Park in Deakin and Marion Mahony Griffin View, the viewing platform on Mount Ainslie. In the past ten years, seven parks have been named to honour the contribution of individual women, nine commemorate men and nine recognise things characteristic of Australia, including words from the Nggunawal language.

The Government is unable to report on the number of non-binary people commemorated in ACT place names. Currently personal biographical information, such as a person identifying as non-binary, is only captured if it relates to their contribution. For example, the deceased person identified as non-binary as part of their advocacy for the rights of LGBTIQ+ people and diversity. This information may be offered by the relatives or close colleagues of the person during consultation to name a place. The Minister for Planning and Land Management has also encouraged gender inclusive language in place naming. If a person's preferred pronoun is not clear, the Place Names Unit will look for opportunities to choose gender-neutral pronouns and avoid using gender-specific job titles.

Place names nationally and internationally are used to provide posthumous commemoration. Notwithstanding, there are opportunities for people from LGBTIQ+ groups to be publicly acknowledged under the Australian Honours system, the naming of academic scholarships and other forms of public recognition.

Opportunities to increase the representation of women and non-binary people, especially of diverse backgrounds and First Nations leaders through public commemoration (places, monuments, streets, and suburbs) in the ACT

The main opportunity for new place names is the naming of roads and parks in new estates. The ACT Place Names Unit consults with family members and relevant cultural groups, on behalf of the Committee, for permission to posthumously commemorate personal names, including the names of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. All proposals are managed with respect to personal and cultural sensitivities.

In 2002, the *Public Places Names Act 1989* (the Act) was amended to require consideration of whether women are well-represented in the names of suburbs and public places. The number of women recognised is improving with statistics showing that in the past 10 years, the gender representation for new names has improved to approximately 40% women and 60% men. A policy to allow both a first name and family name in the determined place name has contributed to the increase, while also satisfying the legislative requirement for unique addressing. We are reversing the decades of patriarchal place naming but obviously there is some way to go.

The guidelines made under the Act, the *Public Place Names (Naming of public places) Guidelines 2021*, provide for public place names in the ACT to be reflective of diverse cultural situations and cognisant of community sensitivities. The Minister for Planning and Land Management has requested Officials consider amendments to this clause to also promote equality and diversity in the people recognised.

The Minister for Planning and Land Management has also requested further discussion and consideration could be given to opportunities to address this matter through different naming opportunities, such as awards and academic scholarships.

The ACT is represented on the Australia and New Zealand Working Group on Place Names (ANZWGPN), a cooperative of representatives from both nations in which relevant Australian members cooperate in lieu of an official national-level names authority. ANZWGPN benefits from the work of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). UNGEGN has identified a strategy for culture, heritage and language recognition to recognise that geographical names are a source of identity; encourage recognition of heritage and equality; and support indigenous, regional and/or minority groups' language revitalisation and preservation.

The ANZWGPN administers a national policy to provide for the non-duplication of existing locality and suburb names and to enable jurisdictions to reserve the names of eminent people for future consideration. The ACT has confidentially reserved the names of various prominent people however the names of some eminent Australians cannot be easily considered for the ACT as their name is already in use in other jurisdictions.

There is no particular policy to seek out minority groups for representation in the heritage register or in access or engagement programs. However, the Canberra Tracks signs allow for the stories of the ACT's heritage to be accessible to the public. There are Canberra Tracks signs which focus on women, First Nations people and cultural diversity. There is usually a connection to the heritage register (both successful and unsuccessful nominations) which directs where signs are installed.

In accordance with the *Heritage Act 2004*, the Heritage Council maintains a register of heritage places and objects. To be included on the ACT Heritage Register a place or object must meet one or more heritage significance criteria, as defined in the Act. ACT Heritage provides administrative support to the Council in the assessment of nominations. This process is informed by the *Heritage Assessment Policy* (March 2018). The strict guidelines and thresholds that are followed make sure that any place or object included on the heritage register has Territory-level significance. Therefore, inclusion on the ACT Heritage Register in effect memorialises people who are strongly associated with a place or object.

There are a number of criteria in the *Heritage Act 2004* that can be closely related to the memorialisation of cultural groups, people or individuals. Two criteria have particular relevance, including: Criterion g – to meet this criterion a place or object must have a strong or special association with the ACT community, or a cultural group in the ACT for social, cultural or spiritual reasons; and Criterion h – to meet this criterion a place or object must have a special association with the life or work of a person, or people, important to the history of the ACT. Where relevant, inclusion under these criteria may be closely associated with women, non-binary people,

people of diverse backgrounds and First Nations. Individuals and groups identified in this way may also be appropriate for memorialisation in place names and statues.

Recently the naming of First Nations Places and Objects on the ACT Heritage Register has received increased attention. The names given by the Heritage Council to heritage places and objects during the registration process do not function as official place names, however they are associated with the recognition of the heritage values through the registration process. The recent Provisional Registration of Yeddung Dhaura, Forde is an example of Council working together with the First Nations people to find and use culturally appropriate names for heritage places and objects. The Heritage Council continues to work with the Representative Aboriginal Organisations recognised by the Heritage Act and the Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Group to determine a culturally appropriate name for the Ginninderra Creek Corroboree Ground Cultural Gathering Place.

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate provides the Secretariat for the Dhawura Ngunnawal Caring for Country Committee. This committee supports the promotion of Ngunnawal and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and leaders, and equality and diversity in the people recognised through public commemoration in place naming. The Dhawura Ngunnawal Committee is working alongside the Place Names Unit to facilitate the naming, or dual naming, of key landscape features, as well as parks and nature reserves managed by the ACT Government, with Ngunnawal language. ACT Place Names has supported the Ngunnawal and ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community language and memorialisation of First Nations peoples in public places. The Dhawura Ngunnawal Committee has further advised that any use of Ngunnawal language should be confirmed with the Winanggaay Ngunnawal Language Aboriginal Corporation to make sure it is in line and maintains consistency with the Ngunnawal Language Sketch Grammar. The Dhawura Ngunnawal Committee has identified that with naming of public places with language from other First Nations people it is important to confirm the meaning of the word to make sure it is culturally appropriate for use on Ngunnawal Country.

The suburb names Denman Prospect, Kenny and Macnamara honour the names of three significant women. During the next three years it is expected there will be place naming opportunities in each suburb to increase the representation of women, people of diverse backgrounds and First Nations leaders under the themes, activism and reform; nurses and health administrators; and science and technology. In the future there will be opportunities to further recognise diversity in the people memorialised through public commemoration, including people of South East Asian heritage who came to Australia from the 1970s.

The Minister for the Arts has provided advice from artsACT in response to the Inquiry Terms of Reference. The ACT Government public art collection does not currently fully reflect the diversity of our community. Women are poorly represented, not only as artists but also as subjects in the collection. There is the opportunity to increase the representation of women and non-binary people, especially of diverse backgrounds and First Nations leaders, through public artwork commissions in the ACT. As a step towards addressing this imbalance in gender representation in the public art collection, \$200,000 has been allocated in the 2021-22 Budget for an artwork commission by and about women. A female or non-binary artist will be engaged to design, fabricate and install a public artwork that celebrates women.

The private sector also commissions public art in the ACT located in the public realm. From time to time, works commissioned by others are gifted to the ACT Government for care and management as part of the ACT Government's public art collection. For artworks to be accepted into the collection, it is now a requirement that diversity, equality and inclusion principles be considered by the commissioning party. The ACT Government Public Art Guidelines are being reviewed and updated to reflect this requirement related to gender representation. Although the Guidelines are not mandatory, those commissioning artworks for donation to the ACT Government will need to show the Guidelines have been applied to artwork development.

The Minister for Education and Youth Affairs is also progressing recognising the contribution of distinguished people through the naming of government schools. Section 20(4) of the *Education Act 2004* states "[t]he Minister may name, and change the name of, a government school or school-related institution". When naming a new school, the Education Directorate works with the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs about a preferred theme or direction and consults the ACT Place Names Advisory Committee for suggestions. The Education Directorate consults with appropriate stakeholders, such as the Office for Women or the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, on a shortlist of names. The Minister for Education and Youth Affairs confirms the shortlist, and the shortlisted names are opened for public vote via YourSay. The Minister for Education and Youth Affairs approves the new name before it is announced.

The Education Directorate's naming process is designed to promote equality and diversity in the people recognised through public commemoration. Consultation with both the Place Names Committee and diversity-focused stakeholders makes sure the shortlist is diverse in its proposed names for public commemoration. Since this process was introduced two new schools, Margaret Hendry School and Evelyn Scott School, have been built. Both schools are named after prominent Australian women, the latter of whom was an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person. There is a precedent for naming buildings on public school campuses after deceased students or staff members. This is done on a case-by-case basis when a school community wishes to commemorate an individual. In those cases, the Education Directorate briefs the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs and seeks approval on the name before it is announced.

The ACT Women's Plan 2016-26 sets out the ACT Government's ongoing commitment towards gender equality for all ACT women. The Second Action Plan 2020-22 of the ACT Women's Plan 2016-26 reminds all Canberrans that they have a right to be healthy, safe, have access to equal opportunities to thrive, and to engage in activities that have meaning to them. It is also a reminder that everyone has a role to play in improving gender equality. The guiding principles of the ACT Women's Plan include equality, non-discrimination, intersectionality, everyone's responsibility, diversity and safety. Considering these principles in decision-making on public commemoration can help to make sure women and gender diverse Canberrans are recognised for their valuable contributions to our society. The Minister for Planning and Land Management is seeking further advice regarding the ACT Women's Plan 2016-26 to consider how it might apply to the naming of places and possibly also contribute to an analysis of options for memorialising people from the full range of diversity groups.

The ACT Women's Awards are celebrated annually and honour individual women who have made an outstanding contribution to the lives of women and girls in the ACT. The ACT Women's Honour Roll acknowledges and celebrates outstanding achievements of women in Canberra. The Honour Roll

is published digitally every two years and recognises all past female recipients of a number of awards since self-government in 1988, including ACT Women's Awards; ACT Australian of the Year Awards; ACT Citizen of the Year Awards; ACT Honour Walk; and ACT Scientist of the Year.

The ACT Women's Awards and the ACT Women's Honour Roll recognise the significant contributions of diverse women across the ACT. The women recognised through either initiative are considered worthy of consideration for further commemoration in the ACT.

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate manages the ACT Honour Walk. The Honour Walk recognises individuals or groups from across all categories of endeavour that have made significant and sustained past contributions to the ACT. The Honour Walk aims to recognise the immense contribution made by those who have helped to shape the city of Canberra as we know it today. Recipients are publicly acknowledged with a plaque in their honour on the ACT Honour Walk, located in Ainslie Place, City.

Six plaques are installed onto the ACT Honour Walk every two years and nominations are open year-round. Nominations are considered and selected by a selection panel before they are endorsed by the Chief Minister. All nominations are considered on merit. Nominations from women, and non-binary people, as well as a range of other diverse backgrounds are encouraged, including members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, members of the LGBTIQ+ community, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people living with disability.

Transport Canberra and City Services administers the Roadside and Urban Open Space Memorials Policy, a public document prepared to provide guidance to ACT Government staff and the community on the management of roadside and open space memorials placed on public lands in the ACT. Memorials in urban open spaces provide opportunities to acknowledge all cultures, people and events that have contributed significantly to the history and development of Canberra, whilst roadside memorials allow people to remember their loved ones who have died on ACT roads. The gender-neutral policy was recently updated to explicitly recognise Nggunawal, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and culture.

Suggestions of women and non-binary people who could be commemorated in the ACT; and Suggestions of suitable nominations for public commemoration and location sites

The ACT Government is considering how women and non-binary people can be commemorated in the ACT as part of future public artwork commissioning processes. This will be determined in consultation with the community and the arts sector with support from the Office for Women and the Office of LGBTIQ+ Affairs. Locations for public artworks that commemorate women and non-binary people will depend on the nature of the artwork proposed, who is being represented or which story about significant women or non-binary people is being told. Other considerations for suitable sites include planning and accessibility requirements, existing urban infrastructure especially below ground services, adjoining land use and site visibility or profile. The site for the new public artwork commission will be considered as part of project development in consultation with the relevant Directorates and with the community.

The ACT Government welcomes suggestions of personal names for commemoration, and suggestions of locations, resulting from the Inquiry into memorialisation through public commemoration, particularly to recognise women and diversity.

The Government encourages the community to nominate people for commemoration through place naming by completing the electronic 'Proposal for Commemoration' form available from the ACT Place Names website or by contacting the Co-chair of the ACT Place Names Advisory Committee at email placenames@act.gov.au.

Any other related matters

While not related to memorials, the idea that all road signs, where practical, should be gender neutral has been discussed by the Australian Standards Traffic Control devices Committee (MS-12). This is an issue that Australian Standards is giving further consideration.