



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES
Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Chair), Miss Candice Burch MLA (Deputy Chair), Mr James Milligan MLA

Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into a Territory Coat of Arms

Submission Number: 041

Date Authorised for Publication: 2 April 2019

Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services

LACommitteeETCS@parliament.act.gov.au

Nicolle Burt

26 March 2019

Dear Members of the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services

RE: Inquiry into Territory Coat of Arms

I write with reference to the questions posed by the Standing Committee, namely:

1. Whether there should be a Coat of Arms for the Australian Capital Territory (in addition to the Canberra City Coat of Arms); and
2. What symbols might be included in the design of an ACT Coat of Arms.

1. The Australian Capital Territory is the national seat of government. Although we are not a state (as defined under the Australian Constitution), we function in a similar capacity; our day to day functions and government mirrors the other Australian states. Our residents pay state based taxes and levies and participate in periodic Territory elections to elect our representatives.

However, we are distinguished from other Australian States (and Territories for that matter). We are the National Capital. In 1913, our Territory was designated as the Federal Capital Territory, to fulfil an important foundation in nation building: the formation of a national seat of power to govern our fledgling Australian democratic nation.

As the national capital, it is not only appropriate but a fundamental requirement to develop symbols of state that position the ACT as the key jurisdiction governing our Australian democracy. No, we are not a state. We are the national capital. An ACT Coat of Arms would signify our leadership position in the Commonwealth of Australia.

2. The ACT has plentiful flora and fauna from which we could develop a suitable ACT Coat Of Arms. Any new design would include one of more of those things. We are also the national capital of Australia, so a new design should at the very least incorporate one element from the National Coat of Arms.

In addition, the present Canberra City Coat of Arms recognises the coming together of Europeans and First Nations in the form of the black and white swans that feature either side of the blue shield. This concept should automatically be a central feature of any new design element.

As a modern and progressive place, any new ACT Coat of Arms does not need to be bound by the traditional design elements associated with heraldic symbols such as castles and guns. A new design can be presented as a modern one.

Of course, any new Coat of Arms will change the design elements of the ACT Flag. So any new design needs to account for its use as a fixed, static image that flies in the wind around London Circuit and on City Hill. The table on the next page outlines my suggested design elements for consideration. I don't think we could incorporate all those suggested elements, as simple is best, but it's a start.

I also respectfully suggest that the people of the ACT are given the opportunity to vote on the final choice of a new Coat of Arms. I suggest that a final postal ballot on the top three designs (selected by the Standing Committee) would be the least inconvenient voting method for ACT electors. Should there be a tie, then the Legislative Assembly could have a free vote on the final design.

I trust you will view my comments favourably. Good luck with your efforts as you develop a new ACT Coat of Arms.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Burt'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter 'N' being particularly large and stylized.

Nicolle M Burt

Suggested Image or symbol	Rationale	Additional comment
ACT Colours retained	Current ACT colours	No need to change
Canberra Bluebell	Floral emblem of the ACT	A unique design aspect
Star of Federation	ACT is the National Capital of Australia	Replace the current Southern Cross.
Swamp Wallaby (<i>Wallabia bicolor</i>)	Prevalent in the ACT and surrounding region	Not unique to the ACT but is associated with the ACT
Coat of Arms depicted in First Nations design style	Recognise First Nations Namadgi and Ngunnawal people of Canberra	Should include local First Nations element in any design as this was their traditional homeland...the design can be a modern one
Green and gold incorporated	Reflect the nation's national colours	National Capital Territory role needs to be recognised