



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES
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Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into a Proposal for a Mammal Emblem for the ACT

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Thank you for taking the time to read my submission to Environment Transport and City Services Committee's inquiry into a mammal emblem for the ACT. Please find that it addresses three themes.

Good Emblem Selection

Good emblem selection begins with an easily identifiable subject. Emblems should be distinctive enough to be seen clearly from far away and in low resolution. The echidna succeeds beyond comparison on this front.

As has been established by the ACT Inquiry to select a bird emblem, emblems should be selected based on the community's affinity to the animal, a sense of familiarity and its common occurrence in the area. Some mammals are now being supported as candidates due to their *lack* of qualification in this area – because of their classification as threatened species. This would be completely contradictory to the purpose of an emblem. It does not make sense to select an emblem on the rationale that it is *not* well established in that geographical area.

Let our environmental programs continue the important work for threatened and reintroduced species in the ACT, but don't use it as a mascot. Emblems should be animals we interact with, that we see on the bike path, or on the side of the road. It should be one that represents our area, not one whose population is struggling and can only be seen inside a remote sanctuary. The reintroduced species in Mulligans Flat Woodland Sanctuary are a great testament to the organisation's work, but they represent only one small area of the ACT. An area that is physically fenced off from the rest of the ACT. If the Committee wishes to use this opportunity to facilitate a public education campaign on nature in the ACT, it should let the echidna's monotreme status speak for itself, rather than commandeer the emblem selection for a mammal that falls short on all other criteria.

No mammal rivals the echidna in biology, in aesthetic or in familiarity to the Canberra community.

Symbolism

The echidna has a broad population across Australia, symbolising the way in which Canberra represents the rest of the country. As the capital city, location of the National Cultural Institutions, federal public service, and Federal Parliament – as the meeting place of representatives from across our wide brown land, Canberra is a home in itself for local residents and a temporary one for the rest of the country. The ACT mammal emblem should not just represent the Territory, but the whole of Australia, especially considering our transient population.

During the long held public discussion about the mammal emblem, the comment has also been made that the echidna represents the way Canberra can seem 'a bit prickly, with a warm soft side'. Alternatively, it's not entirely inaccurate to say that Canberra is just full of 'a bunch of slow-moving pricks', and honestly the opportunity is too good to pass up.

Completing the Set

Considering that the ACT is the last remaining state or territory in Australia to determine a mammal emblem, we have a responsibility not to entirely mimic, but to make a selection consistent with the emblems of other states and territories. The ACT has an opportunity to complete the set of

Australia's iconic native mammals through its mammal emblem. When we think of Australian animals, we think of kangaroos, koalas, wombats and platypuses. We think of iconic, distinctive creatures unlike those across the rest of the world. We have the opportunity to ensure that Australia's last iconic animal, and one of only two monotremes, receives the recognition it deserves as the mammal emblem for Australia's capital city.

Jayne Flanagan, 