



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMY AND GENDER AND ECONOMIC EQUALITY  
Ms Leanne Castley MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),  
Mr Johnathan Davis MLA

## **Submission Cover sheet**

Inquiry into memorialisation through  
public commemoration

Submission number: 007

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Dear Secretary,

In response to the *inquiry into memorialisation through public commemoration* I would like to express my support for the late Susan 'Sue' Salthouse AM to be publicly commemorated in the Australian Capital Territory through a significant place name, major road or street name, suburb or monument.

For many decades preceding her tragic death in 2020, Sue worked tirelessly to advocate for and ensure better social outcomes for women and particularly women with disabilities. Sue became suddenly wheelchair bound at 45 years of age after falling from a horse. Sue saw this not as a burden, but an exciting new opportunity and challenge for her. From a young age, Sue occupied several leadership roles in her school including head prefect, but unbeknownst to her, her most significant and impactful leadership roles would not come until many decades later.

Following school, Sue pursued a degree in agricultural science and later a diploma of education, where she then moved to Alice Springs on placement to work in Aboriginal communities. Here she gained an appreciation for the ability for education to improve social advantage in disadvantaged individuals and communities. She worked with many women in this community, and it was then Sue saw the wisdom, understanding and determination women could demonstrate.

After her work in Alice Springs, Sue travelled to Kathmandu to trek the Himalayas, where she met the man she would eventually marry and start a family with. Sue and her newly formed family spent three years in Kathmandu and travelled to Italy for a further three years before settling in Canberra.

In 1995, Sue was seriously injured in an accident. She endured a lengthy period of rehabilitation and recovery before returning to work as a teacher. Unfortunately, Sue had lost all confidence in her own ability to do her job and felt very isolated. She soon after retired from teaching unexpectedly. It was in this time of great adversity that Sue became involved with Women With Disabilities Australia (WWDA). Sue remained engaged with the organisation for almost the entirety of the following 25 years and was the national president between 2009 and 2012.

Although Sue always had a passion for social justice, becoming suddenly and unexpectedly disabled strengthened Sue's drive to bring positive social outcomes for those who faced disadvantage and discrimination in society. As president of WWDA, Sue oversaw the creation of a framework to link issues relating to gender and disability to a range of civil, social, economic, political and cultural rights. On top of this Sue and WWDA advocated strongly to ensure the inclusion of Article 6 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which stipulates that nations must recognize the susceptibility of females with disabilities to multiple concurrent forms of discrimination and that they should ensure the empowerment of women to equally attain their human rights.

Sue's passion and advocacy for the empowerment of women with disability was not solely displayed in her long tenure as an active member of Woman with Disabilities Australia. Sue has also worked to develop leadership and training programs for women, including women in Aboriginal communities for in her involvement with Women in Adult Vocational Education (WAVE). She has also participated in the Prime Ministers Advisory Panel to reduce violence against women, chaired the ACT Disability Expert Panel advising on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), was a member of the University of Canberra Council, and was a life member of the Australia Nepal Friendship Society. Put simply, Sue used every opportunity she could to advocate for better outcomes for minority groups, primarily women with disabilities.

Sue has been recognised through various awards, including the 2010 Edna Award for her community activism, 2011 Inclusion Award for her work towards improving inclusion for people with disabilities, 2014 ACT Senior Woman of the Year, 2015 Canberra Citizen of the year, 2015 ACT Local hero award, and several more.

Very tragically, in 2020, Sue was involved in a serious incident in her wheelchair accessible motorcycle on the Commonwealth Avenue bridge and lost her life. In 2022, Sue was posthumously made a member of Member of the Order of Australia(AM) for her significant work and advocacy for people with disabilities, women with disabilities and family violence.

Sue dedicated her life to others. She worked tirelessly to improve social outcomes for people facing disadvantage, but particularly women with disabilities. For this, I firmly believe Susan Salthouse AM's legacy should forever remain and Sue should be publicly commemorated in the Australian Capital Territory through a significant place name, major road or street name, suburb or monument.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Villiers

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