



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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**

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Submission to Inquiry into Memorialisation through Public Commemoration

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this enquiry. My interest is as a professional archivist and as a PhD student at the University of Canberra.

1. As the ANU Archivist I was keenly aware of the lack of women's archives in the ANU Archives, as the early development of the university, established by Act of Parliament in 1946, was male-dominated, and this was true of many areas of society at the time ('Collecting women's archives at the ANU Archives', *Archives and Manuscripts*, no. 46 no.1 March 2018, 78-82).

The Australian National University took a positive step in naming buildings and thoroughfares after early women pioneers, such as academic Germaine Joplin and ANU Council member Senator Dorothy Tangney, when the Kambri development was undertaken, seeking the advice of the ANU Archives to put forward possible names.

I would urge the ACT government to seek the advice of professional historians and archivists in a similar way, so that women now perhaps forgotten by the general public, but worthy of commemoration, are identified and considered.

The Australian Women's Register, a collaboration between the University of Melbourne and the National Foundation for Australian Women, is a useful resource which identifies Canberra women. For instance, the online exhibition 'From Lady Denman to Katy Gallagher: A Century of Women's Contributions to Canberra' was published in the centenary year 2013:

<http://www.womenaustralia.info/exhib/ldkg/index.html>.

2. My PhD research relates to the publication of female poets in the second half of the twentieth century. In the course of this research I have gathered information which strongly supports the inclusion of Rosemary Dobson in Poet's Corner in Garema Place, to join Judith Wright, David Campbell and AD Hope.

Rosemary Dobson's standing as a poet is well-documented in the awards she received for her poetry listed in the AustLit database at <https://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/A23073> and there is no doubt about her identification as a Canberra poet, living and writing here from 1971 until her death

in 2012.

The premier publisher of poetry in Australia last century was Angus and Robertson. Poems were selected for inclusion in their annual anthology of poetry published from 1941 to 1973 by a different poet-editor each year. Poems by Dobson are included in all issues from 1941 to 1973 except two, making her the most anthologised female poet in the series (the next is Judith Wright who is in all but five). Dobson's poems have also been included in every major Australian poetry anthology in the period 1946 to 2015.

Another measure of her standing is the fact that she had a *Collected Poems* published by Angus and Robertson in 1991 and another by the University of Queensland Press in 2012. The publication of a *Collected Poems* for a female poet by a major publisher is unfortunately quite rare in Australia. Rosemary Dobson is indeed worthy of a place in Poet's Corner.

Maggie Shapley

