



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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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: 063**

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# **WOMEN** for an Australian Republic

[www.womenrep.org](http://www.womenrep.org)

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Ms Brianna McGill  
Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Environment and  
Transport and City Services  
Office of the Legislative Assembly for the ACT

Dear Ms McGill

Please find attached the submission from Women for an Australian Republic to the Inquiry into Territory Coat of Arms.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Brasch  
National Convenor  
21 April 2019

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# **WOMEN for an Australian Republic**

## **Submission to the Inquiry into Territory Coat of Arms**

1. Women for an Australian Republic (WfaAR) is a Canberra-based group that has continuously campaigned for an Australian Republic since 1999. We are more than aware, and proud, of our Territory's strong support for the Republic. Its symbols should show that.
2. WfaAR supports a coat of arms for the ACT. The existing one used - that of the City of Canberra intended for a naval ship – does not represent all of the land area of the ACT nor all of the people who live in the Territory. Such a coat of arms is both needed (particularly to be used by the ACT Government which is not the "Canberra Government") and long overdue.
3. It was research undertaken by WfaAR that revealed that the ACT had no coat of arms – see attached letter sent to the ACT Government in 2012 during an earlier campaign of representations about the deficiencies of the City of Canberra symbols.
4. The Committee has asked what sort of symbols should be on an ACT coat of arms. They should be:
  - Evocative of the colours and features of the landscape – its beauty
  - Flora, fauna and produce/products of the ACT – its land shared by people, plants and animals
  - Some symbolic features that indicate the purpose, eg education and government, and the design of the city- its mystery and progress
  - Easy to reproduce; instantly recognisable as belonging to the ACT.
5. The coat of arms could share historical references in its design to the coats of arms of other States and Territories but with fewer kangaroos, awkward human representations and a much more imaginative colour scheme and design.
6. The SA and WA coat of arms are both simple and elegant, SA notably without reference to the Crown. The most recent design, that of the NT in 1978, is dull and unimaginative.
7. An ACT coat of arms should have the following features:
  - No references to the United Kingdom or the British monarchy either in the motto (if there is one) or as part of the design; motto in English
  - References to the Indigenous nations that occupied the land area of the ACT before European settlement
  - References and homage to the Griffins design for the city
  - The design should be bright; attractive; attention-grabbing; forward-looking and modern to symbolise the most progressive part of the country
  - It should be fitting for the nation's capital territory.

8. It should be a brand new design from scratch, not a cut-down or altered version of the existing City of Canberra coat of arms because that the easiest and least controversial thing to do. The final design choice should be bold.

9. There should be a design competition, commissioned by the ACT Government and open to the world's best designers. The winning design should not be designed or altered by bureaucrats or the Legislative Assembly, nor should it be the result of a competition among local school students. This competition should have the necessary gravitas.

10. For public contribution to the design phase, we recommend that used by the New Zealand Government for the design of a new flag during 2015 and 2016. The NZ Flag Consideration Panel consisted of 12 members including a youth representative who was a school student. This could be supplemented by an advisory group of local and Australian artists and designers (artists and designers could also be members of the panel). Both groups should have at least 50 percent female members.

11. More information about the NZ process is available at:

<https://dpmc.govt.nz/our-programmes/special-programmes/flag-consideration-project>

<https://mch.govt.nz/news-events/news/flag-consideration-panel-members-announced>

12. There should be a later, broader public consultation and involvement at an advanced stage of the choice process to increase civics awareness and education. Unlike what took place in NZ, we do not recommend open slather on designs open to all-comers and run-off voting to come up with a result as this process will be too unwieldy (and costly) for a small jurisdiction. The aim should be for the best and most aesthetic result so that we do not have a repeat of the result of the ACT flag (might we say "boring and unevocative") vote in the 1990s.

13. Final designs for the coat of arms should be put on display including in the rural areas of the ACT. They should also be displayed online. Ridicule on social media should be anticipated.

14. A corollary of the advent of a coat of arms for the ACT will be that a new one for the City of Canberra will also be required. There should be a clear delineation between the symbols of the capital city (for the City of Canberra coat of arms) and those of the ACT (for that of the federal capital territory).

Canberra  
21 April 2019