ACT PLACE NAMES COMMITTEE & GUIDELINES REVIEW
JUNE 2019
Executive summary

The ACT Place Names Committee and Guidelines Review (the Review) has responded to the ACT Legislative Assembly motion of 28 November 2018 and investigated key processes supporting the naming of public places in the Territory. The Review identifies a number of options and opportunities to improve the processes and community input for naming public places. The Review found that the current system and processes for naming public places in the ACT are robust and thorough; however, the ACT Place Names Committee membership and terms of reference could be updated to reflect best practice ACT Government processes for boards and committees.

The Review recognises that the work of the ACT Place Names Committee (the Committee) has been well received by the community. The Review also recognises that the current naming procedures have not resulted in any place names that do not meet with community standards reflective of a modern, inclusive and progressive Canberra. The public place names specifically mentioned in the Assembly resolution are considered legacy issues, having been named many years ago and prior to ACT self-government.

The Review sets out options and recommendations and provides opportunities to expand community input and increase transparency in decision-making. It aims to find ways to make it easier and clearer for members of the community to raise concerns with the committee to identify instances where the naming of a place has caused hurt and distress to our community.

Part A Report on the review of the ACT Place Names Committee
This section of the report reviews the terms of reference and expansion of membership for the Committee to ensure it continues to be representative of the diversity of Canberra as a modern, inclusive and progressive city.

Part B Report on the review of the ACT Public Place Names Guidelines
This section of the report reviews the Public Place Names Guidelines to ensure that they meet with community standards, allow for greater community input and capacity to raise concerns.

Part C Report on the consideration of community proposals for place naming
The report considers whether the Committee and place-naming processes can consider community proposals relating to place names that no longer meet community standards and how processes to raise complaints or provided feedback can be improved.

Part D Report on the review of specific place names
This section of the report provides context on the specific names mentioned in the Assembly Resolution, the Committee’s advice and provides options for consideration by Government.

Part E Summary of Options and Recommendations
This section of the report outlines options and recommendations that are identified throughout the review report.
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Introduction

The ACT Place Names Committee & Guidelines Review (the Review) responds to the motion passed by the Legislative Assembly on 28 November 2018. The resolution required the ACT Government to conduct a review of the ACT Place Names Committee, the Public Place Names Guidelines and associated processes. The Review also called on the ACT Place Names Committee to review the naming of two public places, Haig Park and William Slim Drive.

The resolution calls on the ACT Government to:

a. review the terms of reference and expansion of membership for the ACT Place Names Committee to ensure it continues to be representative of the diversity of Canberra as a modern, inclusive and progressive city;

b. review the Public Place Names Guidelines to ensure that they meet with community standards, allow for greater community input and capacity to raise concerns;

c. ensure that the ACT Place Names Committee considers community proposals relating to place names that no longer meet community standards;

d. request the ACT Place Names Committee review particular non-residential place names that have been the subject of significant community disquiet, such as William Slim Drive and Haig Park, as a priority; and

e. report to the Assembly during the June 2019 sitting period on the outcomes of this review.

The full Assembly resolution is provided at Appendix 1.

The terms of reference and scope of the Review have been set by the Assembly in the resolution. Relevantly, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse delivered a recommendation that institutions should review their existing institutional honours, dedications and memorials to make sure that they do not honour perpetrators of child sexual abuse.
Method

The method for assessment of each item of the Review detailed below outlines the benchmarks and best practice examples used and informs what the recommendations and options are based on. More detail on the scope and method of review is provided at Appendix 3.

Part A: Review the ACT Place Names Committee

In the Assembly motion, the ACT Government was called upon to review the terms of reference and expansion of membership for the Committee to ensure it continues to be representative of the diversity of Canberra as a modern, inclusive and progressive city.

The terms of reference for the Committee were assessed against the ACT Government’s Better Practice Toolkit, an online resource to assist with managing the operation of ACT Government Boards and Committees. In relation to the expansion of membership for the Committee, the ACT Government’s Governance Principles—Appointments, Boards and Committees in the ACT (March 2017) provided a benchmark to assess the current Committee membership against.

Part B: Review the Public Place Names Guidelines

The Assembly motion called on the ACT Government to review the Public Place Names Guidelines to ensure that they meet with community standards, allow for greater community input and capacity to raise concerns.

The Review assessed the Public Place Names (Naming of Public Places) Guidelines 2014 (No 1) (NI2014-643) (the Guidelines) against a cross-jurisdictional analysis of place naming guidelines in other jurisdictions. The Review also assessed the Guidelines, the place names website and the community engagement process against ACT Government best practice and a cross-jurisdictional analysis of community input practices for naming public places in other jurisdictions. The Review also considered the existing complaints process for members of the community to raise concerns over place names that they feel do not meet community standards, assessing it against other ACT Government complaints and feedback procedures.

Part C: Review the Committee’s ability to consider community proposals

The Assembly motion also called on the ACT Government to ensure the Committee considers community proposals relating to place names that no longer meet community standards. The Review assessed the Guidelines and the Committee terms of reference to identify a mandate and establish a defined process for the Committee to consider community proposals relating to place names that no longer meet community standards.

Part D: Review specific place names

The Assembly motion also called on the Committee to review particular non-residential place names that have been the subject of significant community disquiet, such as William Slim Drive and Haig Park. EPSDD wrote to the Chair of the Committee to advise of the review and to invite feedback on the items set out in the Assembly motion. The Committee was provided with relevant information to inform its review of the particular names identified. The Committee’s response to the particular naming issues and other items has been provided in relevant sections of this Review. The ACT Government also wrote to the relatives of the Slim family and attempted to contact relatives of the Haig family to further inform the advice of the Committee back to the Review. No contact was made.

1 Available online at https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/policystrategic/cabinet/governance
with the Haig family, while the response from the Slim family is provided at Appendix 5 to the Review.

**Place Naming in the ACT**

This section outlines the existing processes for the naming of public places within the ACT to provide important contextual information about the responsible agencies and the processes used. There are different processes for naming districts, divisions (suburbs), street names and other public places, with different entities responsible for naming.

**Entity Responsibility**

*Table 1: Entity Responsibility*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Authority &amp; Legislation</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Australian Government</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian Electoral Commission</td>
<td>Australian Electoral Commission</td>
<td>&gt; Federal Electoral Divisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Capital Authority (NCA)</td>
<td>National Capital Authority (NCA)</td>
<td>&gt; Places on National Land in Designated Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canberra National Memorials Committee</td>
<td>Canberra National Memorials Committee</td>
<td>&gt; (the Ordinance applies only in relation to National land, as defined in s 27 of the Australian Capital Territory (Planning and Land Management) Act 1988 (Cth) (PALM Act))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Memorials Ordinance 1928</td>
<td>National Memorials Ordinance 1928</td>
<td>&gt; (see note in the Guidelines – the ACT will consult with the Commonwealth (NCA) on naming of public places on Territory Land in Designated Areas. Designated Areas are specified under the National Capital Plan, as per s 10 of the PALM Act)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The ACT Government</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT Electoral Commission</td>
<td>ACT Electoral Commission</td>
<td>&gt; Territory Electoral Divisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts Act 2002</td>
<td>Districts Act 2002</td>
<td>&gt; Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Place Names Act 1989</td>
<td>Public Place Names Act 1989</td>
<td>&gt; Divisions/Suburbs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Road names</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Public Open Space</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education Act 2004</td>
<td>Education Act 2004</td>
<td>&gt; Geographical feature names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Government school or school related institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-government</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nil</td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Building Names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Estate or vanity names</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Private roads on leased land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; Sportsgrounds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, there are other buildings and places in the ACT named by other entities such as the Australian Government’s Department of Defence and Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities, Canberra Airport, ACT Health, universities and non-government schools.
Electoral divisions

Federal electoral division naming is part of the process of conducting a federal redistribution. It is the responsibility of the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC). Examples in the ACT include the seats of Bean, Fenner and Canberra. The AEC submission guidelines apply to all stages of a redistribution. The AEC naming guidelines are considered at all stages of the process.

When someone makes a suggestion or comments on a suggestion that refers to a name, the offered name will be considered against the naming guidelines. If different names are offered in objections or comments on objections or at a public inquiry, they will also be considered against the naming guidelines.

ACT electoral divisions are named by the ACT Electoral Commission under the *Electoral Act 1992*.

Places located on National Land within designated areas

The National Capital Authority administers the naming of public places on National Land in designated areas, in consultation with the Canberra National Memorials Committee, empowered by the *National Memorials Ordinance 1928*.

![Figure 1: Map of NCA designated areas in Canberra shown in pink](image)

Divisions and public places on Territory land in designated areas are named under the *Public Place Names Act 1989* in consultation with the National Capital Authority.
Designated areas include all major approach routes to Canberra, the Parliamentary Zone, Lake Burley Griffin and surrounding parklands, the Australian National University, Russell Defence Precinct and Dunroon (Australian Defence Force Academy). Designated areas also include the Inner Hills of the National Capital including Mount Majura and Mount Ainslie, Black Mountain, O'Connor Ridge, Red Hill, Oakey Hill, Mount Painter, the Pinnacle and Stromlo Forest.

Places named prior to self-government

The Commonwealth was responsible for the naming of places prior to 1989 under the 1928 Ordinance which provides for the location and character of national memorials, and the nomenclature of divisions and public places. Other Commonwealth ordinances, such as the Nature Conservation Ordinance 1980, under which the Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve was named, provided the power to name other public places.

Districts

Districts in the ACT are named by the responsible Minister under the Districts Act 2002 (ACT). There are 19 districts in the ACT. A district can comprise a number of divisions (suburbs). The current districts include Canberra Central, Woden Valley, Belconnen, Weston Creek, Tuggeranong, Gungahlin and the most recent, Molonglo Valley.

Divisions (suburbs), geographical features and roads

The legislation for the naming of public places in the Territory is the Public Place Names Act 1989 (ACT). The Public Place Names Act was enacted following the establishment of self-government in the Territory.

The Public Place Names Act gives the Minister the power to determine the names of divisions (suburbs) and public places on Territory land. The meaning of the term public place is defined in section 2 of the Act and includes streets, geographical features and places the public is entitled to use, such as parks. The Act also provides an ability for the Minister to make guidelines about the naming of public places, which provide further guidance on considerations before decisions on place naming are made.

In practice, the Minister has delegated his functions under the Public Place Names Act to Senior Executive Service officers within EPSDD. Often, the Director-General of EPSDD, who is also the Chief Planning Executive, will make decisions as the Minister’s delegate.

As outlined in further detail below, and in following sections of this report, the Committee has been established as an advisory Committee to provide advice to the Minister and/or Delegate on the naming of public places and contentious naming matters. Division names and naming themes are recommended to the Minister (or delegate) by the Committee.

A disallowable instrument is prepared to recommend the determination of a division/public place name to the Minister or delegate. Once the instrument has been approved, it is notified on the ACT Legislation Register and tabled in the Legislative Assembly. The instrument is subject to a six day disallowance period, in which a motion may be moved in the Assembly to amend or disallow the instrument.

The Place Names Unit in EPSDD provides secretariat support to the Committee.

This Review focusses on the naming of public places under the Public Place Names Act.
Part A Report on the review of the ACT Place Names Committee

This section of the report reviews the terms of reference and expansion of membership of the Committee to ensure it continues to be representative of the diversity of Canberra as a modern, inclusive and progressive city.

As outlined in the method section above, the Review addresses the membership and governance of the Committee by assessing the current processes against the ACT Government’s Governance Principles—Appointments, Boards and Committees in the ACT and the Better Practice Toolkit.

ACT Place Names Committee’s recommendation for the Committee’s terms of reference and expansion of membership

Co-chair of the ACT Place Names Committee, Dr David Headon, provided a response from the Committee to item 2(a) of the Resolution regarding the Committee’s terms of reference and expansion of membership. A full copy of the response is provided at Appendix 2. The response is extracted below:

It is the committee’s view that the current terms of reference offer flexibility to ensure the membership can represent the diversity of Canberra as a modern, inclusive and progressive city. It is our understanding that the Minister can establish the membership according to the range of expertise and diversity provided by applicants responding to the expression of interest and also, through consultation undertaken in accordance with the ACT Government’s committee appointment guidelines and governance principles. There is no minimum or maximum number of members specified in the terms of reference.

The current committee was appointed by the Minister in October 2017 following a publicly advertised expression of interest process. The membership comprises the Surveyor-General of the ACT, a representative of the National Capital Authority, two representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and eight others, all having a connection and commitment to the ACT.

The appointed members have experience or expertise in disciplines covering Australian history, Australian heritage, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture, anthropology, archaeology, cultural diversity, town planning, authoritative addressing and media.

It is the committee’s view that the specific appointment of a young adult person, with relevant experience, would bring another perspective to the membership and provide for the views of younger people in the community to be particularly considered in the place names process.

Terms of Reference

The current Terms of Reference for the Committee is provided at Appendix 4. The document was updated in October 2017 for the Expression of Interest process to appoint the current committee.

The Terms of Reference have been prepared to provide Committee members and key stakeholders with a common understanding of the Committee’s purpose, roles, responsibilities, operations, tenure and obligations.

The Terms of Reference reflect the role of the Committee as a non-statutory Ministerial advisory body and outline four overarching functions:
1. Advise the responsible Minister (or Minister’s delegate) on all proposals for geographic and division (suburb) names and the themes to be adopted for naming roads and other public places on Territory land in the ACT.

2. Advise the ACT Place Names officers on proposed special commemorations or matters brought before members at committee meetings or by email.

3. Consider and advise on place name issues that arise from time to time.

4. Review proposed names for new roads and other public places and provide guidance to the Place Names officers as required.

The Terms of Reference were assessed against the Better Practice Toolkit. Overall, the current Terms of Reference perform well, however some opportunities for improvements have been identified.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made:

- The Terms of Reference should be updated to include a section on Powers of the Committee to reinforce the non-statutory and advisory nature of the Committee and outline its power/role in place names decision-making.

- The Terms of Reference should be updated to establish a clear mandate and responsibility for the Committee to advise the Minister or delegate on contentious place naming issues, including where commemoration of particular names may no longer represent community standards. This will strengthen the role of the Committee to collect and source evidence to support their advice to the Minister or delegate, including information held by Government.

- The Terms of Reference should be updated to outline the process for appointing the Chair/Co-Chairs, i.e. Ministerial appointment. The Terms of Reference should also consider whether there is a need for the appointment of a Deputy-Chair or acting arrangements should the need arise. This section should also detail any requirements or restrictions on who can be appointed to the role of Chair.

- The Terms of Reference should be updated to outline the operations of the Committee, including who provides Secretariat support, how often the Committee will meet, who can call a meeting and who can attend meetings, what conditions are required for a meeting to proceed (quorum) and how the Committee will capture and document its decisions/advice.

- The Terms of Reference should be updated to outline the process by which the Committee undergoes regular monitoring or evaluation of its performance, for example through the EPSDD Annual Report.

**Expansion of membership**

The ACT Government policy on boards and committees’ appointments seeks to achieve and maintain 50% representation of women and increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with a disability, and persons from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The Review notes that the current ACT Government process for appointments to boards and committees mandates consultation with the agencies responsible for women, LGBTIQ and multicultural affairs to identify suitable candidates for consideration.

For the current Committee, Minister Mick Gentleman MLA appointed members following a public expression of interest process conducted in June 2017. All members were appointed for a period of three years commencing on 1 October 2017. The appointments will expire on 30 September 2020.
The current membership of the committee comprises 12 people and achieves 50% representation of women.

The current Terms of Reference for the Committee states that membership may consist of:

- a chairperson with relevant experience
- the Surveyor-General of the ACT
- a representative with an understanding of local heritage
- representatives with a background in, or knowledge of, Australian history (local and/or national)
- a representative from the local media
- a representative with a multicultural background
- an Indigenous representative
- a representative of the National Capital Authority.

The current membership of the Committee has representatives from each of these categories. The current membership has a high proportion of members with qualifications and expertise in Australian and local history, as this is considered an important skillset for the Committee. The current number of members, 12, is considered suitable and it is not considered necessary to increase the number of members on the Committee.

The Review notes that a number of members have been appointed for multiple three-year terms. This was due to a significant number of new appointees to the Committee membership and the need to ensure some continuity of membership and experience on the new Committee.

The membership of the Committee has been assessed against the Government’s Governance Principles—Appointments, Boards and Committees in the ACT and the Better Practice Toolkit.

Overall, the membership requirements in the Terms of Reference are broadly representative and reflect a diverse membership; however, the categories of membership could be expanded to further reflect Canberra’s standing as a modern, inclusive and progressive city.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made:

- The membership section of the Terms of Reference should be amended to ensure representatives on the Committee reflect a broader diversity in age, experience and identity, including adding the following representatives:
  - A young person (under the age of 30)
  - A representative with a background in, or knowledge of, Indigenous languages.

- The expression-of-interest process for new Committee appointments should include a broad and multi-faceted communications approach that targets new members and seeks to reach a diverse range of candidates.

- EPSDD consider adopting a remuneration or participation payment policy to remove barriers to Committee participation and to recognise the expertise and contribution of Committee members.
Part B Report on the review of the ACT Public Place Names Guidelines

This section of the review assesses the Public Place Names (Naming of Public Places) Guidelines 2014 (No 1) (NI2014-643) (the Guidelines) against an analysis of place naming guidelines for meeting current community standards in other jurisdictions. This section also reviews the Guidelines in relation to opportunities for community input and the ability for the community to raise concerns or make complaints.

Introduction
The Guidelines are a notifiable instrument made under section 4A of the Public Place Names Act 1989. Under s 3 of the Public Place Names Act, before the Minister or delegate makes a decision about the naming of a public place, he or she must consider the Guidelines.

This section of the review assesses the guidelines for community standards, community engagement and dual naming against a number of jurisdictions in Australia and internationally.

Place naming forms an important part of the land release and estate development planning process for new divisions. Therefore, it is important that the process for the naming of public places, such as roads and public parks, is efficient and timely so as not to cause unnecessary delays.

Jurisdictional analysis
An analysis of other jurisdictions in Australia identified that most place-naming processes have a component of public engagement and established guidelines that require names to meet community standards or avoid discriminatory and inappropriate names.

The statutory process to name public places in the ACT is unique compared to that applied in other jurisdictions in Australia. In the ACT, the legislation provides for commemorative naming to formally recognise, from a national viewpoint, the names of people who have made important contributions to Australia, things characteristic of Australia and words from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander vocabulary.

The Northern Territory is the only other state/territory jurisdiction directly responsible for the naming of public roads. In other jurisdictions, this function is generally devolved to local government and overseen by a state authority, such as the Geographical Names Board of NSW. In the ACT, public place names are determined according to the nomenclature theme assigned to the division (suburb) in which the place is located. The Committee advises the Minister about potential themes for new divisions on Territory land and is mindful about providing opportunities to commemorate the names of women and names to reflect an inclusive and diverse community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>Reference to community standards</th>
<th>Community engagement component</th>
<th>Dual naming policy</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td>Section 2 of the Guidelines states that derogatory or discriminatory terms or terms in poor taste should be avoided.</td>
<td>Partial. Consultation with commemorated person’s relatives, close colleagues or a relevant professional organisation.</td>
<td>No formal policy, however the principle of dual naming of geographical features is supported and will be considered as proposals are made and opportunities arise.</td>
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</table>
Consultation with an appropriate cultural group before commemorating a word from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander vocabulary.

Where a park is named in an existing neighbourhood, consultation is undertaken with the local community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NSW</th>
<th>Yes.</th>
<th>Yes.</th>
<th>Yes.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The NSW Geographical Names Board (GNB) Guidelines for the determination of place names state that names shall be “appropriate to community sensitivities”.</td>
<td>The Roads Regulation 2018 (NSW) requires statutory notification and allows for submissions on proposal to name a road.</td>
<td>NSW has a dual naming policy for geographical features and cultural sites titled, ‘The Dual naming supporting cultural recognition policy’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section 7.1 of the GNB place naming policy identifies occasions where “people commemorated have later proven to be of poor character or otherwise thought to be unworthy.”</td>
<td>The GNB place naming policy requires Councils to provide evidence they have sought community feedback. The guidelines and procedures are aimed at ensuring community input, giving all interested parties a say in a naming decision.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WA</th>
<th>Yes.</th>
<th>Yes.</th>
<th>Yes.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Section 1.2.6 of Policies and Standards for Geographical Naming in WA allows for discriminatory, derogatory and inappropriate names and requests from the public to be assessed on a case by case basis.</td>
<td>Section 1.8.1 of the Policies and Standards for Geographical Naming in WA requires consultation with the community.</td>
<td>The use of dual naming is supported as a means of giving concurrent and shared recognition of two cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of deceased personal commemorative names requires evidence of broad community support for the proposal, among other requirements.</td>
<td>Consultation with the relevant Aboriginal communities should be undertaken prior to any public consultation on the proposed name(s).</td>
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<tr>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Partial.</th>
<th>None.</th>
<th>Yes.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA Government’s Suburb, road and place names Geographical names guidelines do not reference community standards.</td>
<td>None required under the Geographical Names Act 1991 (SA)</td>
<td>The Geographical Names Act 1991 (SA) provides for a dual geographical name to be assigned to a place, in order to retain and record</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Each council prepares road name policy based on Guidelines for the Selection of Names for Roads in SA, which recommends that names, which are offensive or likely to give offence should not be used.

Naming and renaming proposals are listed on the Office of the Surveyor General website, and submissions or proposals are welcome.

both the Aboriginal and European nomenclature heritage of South Australia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NT</th>
<th>None.</th>
<th>None.</th>
<th>None under legislation.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None required under the Place Names Act 1967 (NT). The Place Names Committee for the Northern Territory is established under section 5 of the Place Names Act, to make recommendations to the Minister for Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics for the naming of a place.</td>
<td>The NT Place Names Act allows that the Place Names Committee can develop guidelines for notification. Names submitted are to be accompanied by supporting reasons, which can include community engagement. When a recently deceased person's name is suggested, the permission of a member of the family is required.</td>
<td>A dual naming system or use of alternate/alternative names may be used for the naming of a physical feature where no official or recorded name exists and where a name change is not possible or acceptable, but it is not enshrined in the legislation.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NZ</th>
<th>Yes.</th>
<th>Yes.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The New Zealand Geographic Board (Ngā Pou Taunaha o Aotearoa) Act 2008 defines categories of names that should be avoided, including names that are in poor taste or likely to cause offence and names that are discriminatory or derogatory in terms of race, gender, creed, political affiliation.</td>
<td>If the NZGB supports the naming proposal it notifies it on the Land Information New Zealand website, in newspapers and other publications, asking for supporting or objecting submissions from the public with reasons.</td>
<td>A number of New Zealand places have been changed to include the original Māori name of the place as well as the European name used for the last 100–200 years.</td>
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</table>
ACT Place Names Committee's recommendation for greater capacity to raise concerns and community input

Co-chair of the ACT Place Names Committee, Dr David Headon, provided a response from the Committee to item 2(b) of the Resolution regarding the Guidelines and ensuring that they meet with community standards, allow for greater community input and capacity to raise concerns. A full copy of the response is provided at Appendix 2. The response is extracted below:

As raised in correspondence dated 26 November 2018, the committee has concerns about the phrase “...community standards...”. How does one generation determine community standards as opposed to another? The committee is cognisant of community sensitivities and will continue to advocate for new place names which the members can reasonably presume will be acceptable to the community at the time the naming determination is made. This commitment is supported by the Public Place Names (Naming of Public Places) Guidelines 2014 (No 1) which provide for “the desirability for the totality of public place names in the ACT to be reflective of diverse cultural situations” and for the avoidance of “derogatory or discriminatory terms or terms in poor taste”.

The committee believes changes to the ACT Place Names website could improve existing opportunities for the community, both locally and nationally, to nominate names and/or to raise concerns in relation to a commemorated place name.

In relation to the community raising concerns, it is important that consideration is also given to the possible hurt caused to families whose commemorated family member could be subject to community scrutiny for alleged indiscretions (real or perceived) which could result in protracted public debate.

The committee recommends improving the community engagement process by developing criteria to require proponents to substantiate any request to revisit the naming of a division and/or public place by providing strong reasons, supported by rigorous evidence. This would assist the committee to investigate requests made in light of further research, controversy or contemporary opinion and facilitate timely advice to the Minister about whether a place name should be revoked or retained. The committee may also recommend further information for the particular ACTmapi place name citation to additionally describe the commemorated person’s historical legacy and encourage reflection and discussion in the community.

Community standards

In Australia, community standards have evolved over time and will continue to evolve in the future. Community standards are informed by Australia’s tradition of representative democracy, the role of the media, judicial authority in legal precedent or statute and, more recently, social media and the increasing role of deliberative democracy in decision-making. The decision-making apparatus of the ACT Government, including ministerial advisory committees will continue to adjust to community standards and values over time, as we have a commitment to new and better ways of doing things and not settling for how it has always been.

Despite the difficulty in defining particular community standards and that they can be transient, it is clear that the ACT’s current community standards are those of a modern, inclusive and progressive city. Any new proposals for naming should be judged against current community standards. The
Committee is well-placed, as a body made up of community representatives, to advise the Minister or delegate on whether a proposed name conforms to current community standards. The need to be able to advise on community standards further highlights the need for the Committee to be a diverse representative body bringing together a number of views and backgrounds. It is important to note that since the establishment of the Committee, there have been no place-naming decisions that have raised issues of community standards. The particular names identified in the Assembly Resolution are legacy names that were decided under a different process.

The Guidelines make limited reference to the concept of community standards. The Guidelines refer to the desirability for the totality of public place names in the ACT to be reflective of diverse cultural situations (see cl 1(f) of the Guidelines). Clause 2 of the Guidelines also states that the following terms and names should be avoided:

(a) derogatory or discriminatory terms or terms in poor taste;
(b) names contrived to circumvent other parts of these guidelines; and
(c) terms which could be construed as advertising a commercial or industrial enterprise.

It is observed that the Guidelines currently provide limited guidance to the Committee on the need to consider community standards and the meaning of the term. An important and necessary improvement to the Guidelines would be to require the Committee to consider community standards and to provide some guidance as to what such consideration would entail.

The NSW Geographical Names Board Policy provides a helpful comparison for guidance on community standards and is extracted below:

“Discriminatory or derogatory names are not acceptable. Such names are those perceived, at a given point in time, to be offensive, demeaning, or harmful to the reputation of individuals, or to social, ethnic, religious or other groups. It is recognised that the perception of ‘discriminatory’ or ‘derogatory’ may vary through time and from place to place. In response to requests from the public, the GNB will investigate the appropriate status of any names deemed to be discriminatory or derogatory.”

The Yale University’s Report of the Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming provides a useful case study of the key considerations of values and community standards between generations as they relate to decisions on place naming and renaming places that may be at odds with the current values of the community. It is considered in more detail in Section C below.

Community input and engagement
The current legislated process for naming public places in the ACT does not contain a general community engagement component. The Guidelines only require that reasonable steps be taken to obtain permission from the person’s relatives, close colleagues or a relevant professional organisation before naming a public place after a person. While the Committee does consult with the community when naming a public park in an established neighbourhood, this is not formally reflected in the Guidelines. The Act also provides for consultation with an appropriate cultural group before commemorating a word from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander vocabulary.

The Review has considered the fact that while the public commemoration of a name is of great interest to the community, it is also a personal matter for the person’s relatives. The Guidelines only allow the names of deceased persons to be considered, with at least 12 months elapsing after the death of a person before that person’s name can be determined.
The ACT Government has committed to strengthening engagement and delivering meaningful, responsive, accountable and inclusive opportunities for genuine engagement. The ACT Government has also adopted principles of Open Government. The ACT Government is committed to transparency in process and information, participation by citizens in the governing process and public collaboration in finding solutions to problems and participation in the improved well-being of the community.

It is necessary that any community input or public consultation process balances the right of the community to provide feedback on proposed names with the right of the deceased person and their remaining relatives to not have their reputation unfairly tarnished. The Review notes the issues raised by the Committee in relation to the sensitivities that arise in the place-naming process. In responding to the Assembly Resolution, and in comparing the ACT’s process to other jurisdictions, the ACT could benefit from the introduction of community input into the place-naming process so that all relevant information is before the decision-maker prior to making a naming decision. It is considered that there is a substantial public benefit in seeking to obtain all relevant and available information about a proposed name before the decision is made, rather than responding to feedback or complaints once a decision has been made.

Requiring the Committee to consider community engagement outcomes as supporting evidence to inform a recommendation to the Minister or delegate will provide the Committee members a clear remit and evidence of community support to make a recommendation. It will also provide an important opportunity for members of the community to comment on proposed naming and give them the capacity to raise concerns or provide further information to the Committee prior to final naming decisions being made.

In addition to the process for formally naming a place, the Review has identified other opportunities for community input in the broader place-naming process.

**Community input opportunities in place-naming process:**

- Increase publicity and improve accessibility to the existing community input process for new naming proposals
- Implement a process to encourage community input on new theme proposals for new divisions (suburbs)
  - Including implementing a process for community input/feedback on proposed nomenclature themes for a division (suburb)
  - Consider community feedback on a number of suitable options put forward by the Committee
- Increased community input on names and words proposed for commemoration
  - Community feedback process, for example, Henry Rolland Park (i.e. support/not support/raise issues for proposed names)
- Community input on existing names
  - To be dealt with later in this report.

In addition to the opportunities for community input, it is recommended that updates be made to the place names website and to the communications strategy for place-naming proposals and decisions so the community is more aware and has the opportunity to become more engaged with the place-naming process.

The naming of Henry Rolland Park in Acton provides a recent example of community input into a place-naming decision. The naming process for West Basin’s new public park was the first time a place name was informed by a community vote using the ACT Government’s community engagement
platform www.yoursay.gov.au. A five-week polling period was held with almost 1500 votes cast. Henry Rolland topped the poll with 684 votes.

**Capacity to raise concerns**

The Review notes that the Guidelines are a statutory instrument that are required to be taken into account by the Minister or delegate *before* making a naming decision. The capacity to raise concerns on proposed names has been considered above in the recommendation of a public consultation process on draft names. The capacity to raise concerns on existing names is considered below in Section C of the Review.

**Recommendations**

The Review recommends that:

- the Guidelines be updated to require the Committee to consider current community standards before naming a place after a person and to provide some guidance as to what such consideration would entail.
- community input is sought on potential themes for new divisions, including nominating new themes and consulting on potential themes raised by the Committee
- the Government invite increased community feedback on proposed names, seeking community input prior to the formal decision being made
  - This could be in the form of a call for community feedback, noting the need to balance community input with the rights of families, such as through the Yoursay website.
- the Guidelines be updated to require the decision-maker to consider the result of any community feedback process on the draft name.
- updates be made to the place names website and to the communications strategy for place naming proposals and decisions so that the community is more aware and has the opportunity to become more engaged with the place-naming process.
Part C Report on the consideration of community proposals for place naming

The Assembly Resolution called on the ACT Government to ensure the Committee considers community proposals relating to place names that no longer meet community standards. This section considers the Committee processes for receiving feedback and complaints from the community on existing names and suggests providing further detail on the process and considerations for when renaming will be considered.

Mandate to consider community feedback
Given the Assembly Resolution and the existing responsibility for the naming of places resting with the Minister or delegate, the Review has felt it necessary to clarify that the Committee has a mandate to receive and consider community proposals for place naming. It has been the experience to date that feedback or complaints about particular names have been provided to the Minister or ACT Government to respond. In some instances, correspondence has been sent directly to the Committee, or the Minister has asked the Committee to consider and advise on a particular issue.

The Review proposes that going forward, the Committee has a mandate to receive community complaints and provide advice to the Minister or delegate on the appropriate course of action. To achieve this, it is necessary to update the terms of reference for the Committee to include such a responsibility. It is also necessary to update the place names website to provide a mechanism for the community to make, and the Committee to receive, such complaints. This is dealt with in more detail below.

Receiving community proposals on existing names
As mentioned above, most community proposals about existing names have been made to the ACT Government, not the Committee. While the place names website has a form to nominate a person for commemoration, there is no specific process for lodging complaints or providing feedback on existing names.

The Committee does have a policy, published on the Place Names website, for considering feedback about existing names and provides consideration for when a name change will be considered. This webpage does not provide a direct mechanism for making a name change proposal, nor does it detail a process for a proposal will be assessed and decided upon. This could be rectified by providing a feedback/complaints portal with an easy to complete form that directly relates to providing feedback or complaints about existing names.

The ACT Government provides a general complaints/feedback mechanism through the Access Canberra website and this could be used to provide such feedback. However, the place names website would benefit from a dedicated online portal for providing feedback/making complaints as this is the most likely approach a member of the community would take.

As noted in the previous section, the Committee agreed that there are opportunities to improve existing processes for the community to nominate names and raise concerns for existing names.

2 Available at https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/ask/
Renaming
The Committee has a policy for renaming existing names which is published on the place names website. The policy advises that changing long-established place names is generally not preferred unless there is good reason to the contrary (for example, to avoid ambiguity, duplication or offence).

The policy on renaming existing names also sets out a number of considerations where a proposal has been received to alter or change a public place name. Where a name change proposal has been received, consideration is given to:

- whether the name causes offence to the public (for example, names that are derogatory or in any way offensive)
- impact of a name change on residents, businesses or organisations using the current name as part of their address
- confusion caused to members of the public using out-of-date maps carrying the original name
- costs involved in publicising a name change to residents, essential service providers and the general public.

Where a change of name is considered necessary, consideration is to be given to the Guidelines when selecting a new name for the place.

There are a very limited number of examples of when a place name has been changed or a name has been revoked. These include:

- the revocation of the name Studio Road in 2018 due to the realignment of Stockdill Drive for the development of the division of Strathnairn, with no residential or commercial addresses attached to the road
- Wilpena Street, Harrison, revoked in 2006 because the place name duplicated the name of a private road within the University of Canberra. The name Whiskey Bay Street was determined in its place to commemorate the Tasmanian geographical feature. In 2007 Whiskey Bay Street was renamed Flagstone Street following a complaint from a resident who considered the name to be offensive. Support for the change of name was gained from all neighbouring property owners.
- Caley Place, Narrabundah was renamed in 2001 because of apparent addressing confusion relating to duplicate numbering in Caley Crescent. The recommended name Roach Place was not supported by residents (Cockroach). Following further consultation the name Mosman Place was determined. Francis Roach Lane was later named in Kingston.
- Wells Station Drive was revoked in 2009 to amend the spelling to reflect the correct historical property name i.e. Well Station Drive, Gungahlin.
- Minnie Bruce Street, Franklin was revoked in 2007 following consultation with a family member who requested commemoration of the writer’s full name—Mary Grant Bruce. The suggested name of three words did not conform to addressing standards and the road was renamed Morris West Street.

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3 Available at https://www.planning.act.gov.au/tools_resources/place_names/place_name_policies/existing_names
As noted in the previous section, the Committee provided input to the Review on community proposals for revisiting place names. The Committee helpfully suggested that further criteria could be developed to assist the community with providing relevant information to the Committee to accompany any complaint.

These criteria could be developed and added to the existing renaming policy. This would provide a clear process and guidance to the community about how the Committee will assess any feedback or complaints, and the factors they will consider when developing their advice for the Minister or delegate.

When developing these criteria, a useful point of reference is the Yale University’s *Report of the Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming*, which is provided as a case study below.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that:

> The Committee develop a feedback/complaints process and publish it on the place names website. The process should detail how a member of the community can provide feedback/complaints, provide an online portal for providing the feedback and provide information on how the Committee will assess the feedback and advise the Minister or delegate.

> The Committee update the renaming policy to provide further criteria to assist the community in providing relevant information for the Committee’s consideration, and providing the criteria against which the Committee will assess community proposals.

> Improvements be made to the place names website to develop an online portal for providing feedback to the Committee on naming proposals, renaming proposals and other feedback.
Case Study: Yale University’s Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming

In 2016, the Yale University established the Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming (Yale Committee) as a result of controversy about the role of naming and renaming buildings on Yale campuses in acknowledging and confronting history. The charge of the Yale Committee was to articulate a set of principles that can guide Yale in decisions about whether to remove a historical name from a building or other prominent structure or space on campus. The Yale Committee was required to identify principles that are enduring rather than specific to particular controversies. The result was a set of principles offering clear guidance on decisions to remove historical names from campus spaces, buildings and structures based on the values and mission of the institution.

Yale University Procedure for Consideration of Renaming Requests

The following passages are extracted from the Yale Committee’s final report:

‘There is a strong presumption against renaming a building on the basis of the values associated with its namesake. Such a renaming should be considered only in exceptional circumstances. The presumption against renaming is at its strongest when a building has been named for someone who made major contributions to the University.’

Principles to be considered: sometimes renaming on the basis of values is warranted

> Is a principal legacy of the namesake fundamentally at odds with the mission of the University?
> Was the relevant principal legacy significantly contested in the time and place in which the namesake lived?
> Did the University, at the time of a naming, honour a namesake for reasons that are fundamentally at odds with the mission of the University?
> Does a building whose namesake has a principal legacy fundamentally at odds with the University’s mission, or which was named for reasons fundamentally at odds with the University’s mission, play a substantial role in forming community at the University?

A renaming request must be submitted in an application that meets the following administrative requirements:

> states the grounds on which the name should be changed;
> specifies how the Principles on Renaming require that the name be changed, presenting a thoroughly researched and well-documented case with supporting historical and other evidence; and
> meets other administrative requirements as the Office of the Secretary may from time to time establish.

Decisions to retain a name or to rename come with obligations of nonerasure, contextualisation, and process:

> When a name is altered, there are obligations on the University to ensure that the removal does not have the effect of erasing history.
> When a name is retained, there may be obligations on the University to ensure that preservation does not have the effect of distorting history.
> The University ought to adopt a formal process for considering whether to alter a building name on account of the values associated with its namesake; such a process should incorporate community input and scholarly expertise.
The Yale Committee advised that renaming would ‘typically prove warranted only when more than one principle listed here points toward renaming; even when more than one principle supports renaming, renaming may not be required if other principles weigh heavily in the balance.’

The Yale University has also published a process for how applications will be processed, assessed and decided. After a name has been considered under this process, it will not be considered again absent a material change in known facts and circumstances.

More information on the Yale Committee’s review and final report is available at https://president.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/CEPR_FINAL_12-2-16.pdf, p 19

Available online at https://secretary.yale.edu/services-resources/procedure-consideration-renaming-requests

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5 Available online at https://secretary.yale.edu/services-resources/procedure-consideration-renaming-requests
Part D Report on the review of specific place names

This section of the report provides the Committee’s response to the Assembly for the Committee to review particular names that have been the subject of significant community disquiet, such as William Slim Drive and Haig Park. The Review provides the Committee response and other relevant information for the Government to consider. The review of specific names is limited to Slim and Haig as the Committee, and the Government, are not aware of any other place names that are causing community disquiet.

ACT Place Names Committee Review of William Slim Drive

Introduction


The Government is aware of public allegations made against Sir William Slim. These have been widely published in local and national media since 2007. These allegations were part of a larger story of child abuse at Fairbridge Farm in NSW, which has since seen significant compensation paid to survivors. The Government has also received correspondence from alleged victims and others requesting that the name of William Slim Drive be changed. Redacted versions of this correspondence were provided to the Committee to fully inform their consideration of the matter before providing advice.

Also, the Government is aware that the recent Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse did not make any adverse public findings about any individuals. The Government has been informed that allegations against Sir William Slim were made to the Royal Commission in private submissions.

There have been no complaints made through the Access Canberra complaints portal since the 2016 (when the portal became operational).

About the Royal Commission

The Royal Commission was established in 2013 in response to allegations of sexual abuse of children in institutional contexts that had been emerging in Australia for many years.

The Royal Commission was not a court of law and could not make decisions about criminal matters. Rather, the Commission delivered recommendations based on what they learned during public hearing. The Royal Commission final report included a finding that institutions should review their existing institutional honours, dedications and memorials to make sure that they do not honour perpetrators of child sexual abuse. The Royal Commission suggested that governments and institutions should respond fully to requests from survivors in relation to such matters, including as part of providing appropriate redress.6

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6 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Final Report, Volume 17 – Beyond the Royal Commission (p 11)
When considering this matter further, it is also relevant to note that the ACT is a human rights jurisdiction, committed to protecting the rights of children and young people, including their right to special protection, because of their vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. This commitment extends to maximising the physical and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people and their connection to family, community, culture, education and employment. These commitments are evident in the Human Rights Act 2004 (ACT) and principles contained in the ACT Children and Young People’s Commitment 2015–2025.

**ACT Place Names Committee Recommendation for William Slim Drive**

Co-chair of the ACT Place Names Committee, Dr David Headon, provided a response from the Committee to item 2(d) of the Resolution regarding the request for the Committee to review the naming of William Slim Drive and Haig Park. A full copy of the response is provided at Appendix 2. The response is extracted below:

The committee has been generally made aware of the allegations raised concerning the 13th Governor-General of Australia, Field Marshal Sir William Slim. In 2014, the former committee agreed—
- to wait and consider the outcome of any legal action in NSW and/or any recommendations resulting from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse;
- that it would like to be on the front foot ready to respond; and
- if a decision is made to rename the road it should not be named after a person.

At the meeting on 19 March, the current committee was provided for the first time with redacted copies of correspondence and responses relating to representations concerning the naming of William Slim Drive.

The committee has noted that the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was released in December 2017.

The committee’s discussion has determined that it is not in a position to come to a view on the ethical, reputational and evidentiary issues current with respect to the name William Slim Drive.

*It is the committee’s recommendation that the ACT Government consider formally writing to the Federal Government (Prime Minister’s Office) for advice on the substance of the allegations and the naming of the public place, commemorating a former Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.*

**Correspondence with Slim Family Representative**

As part of the review, the descendants of Sir William Slim were provided with the opportunity to provide input into the review. A response to the review by descendants of Sir William Slim is provided at Appendix 5. A short extract of the response is provided below:

“...if the street name is to be changed as a result of the allegation of child abuse against our Grandfather by less than a handful of people, my family would object in the strongest possible terms.”

The full response has been considered in developing the options for consideration and will be used to inform any future decisions. It has been published with permission from the author.
Options
Given the sensitive nature of renaming a public place, the circumstances of the allegations made outside of being tested in a formal court process and the fact the alleged perpetrator is deceased, the review presents two options to Government for consideration. The Government should carefully consider the precedent it may set for similar scenarios in the future when making this decision. In informing a decision, the Government may wish to write to the Australian Government seeking further advice, as suggested by the Committee. Also, the Government has announced funding for the duplication of William Slim Drive which is a further consideration in any future naming decision for this public road.

The following options are available to Government:

Option 1. No name change
Option 2. Change the name

ACT Place Names Committee Review of Haig Park

Introduction
The name ‘Haig Park’ was determined under the provisions of the National Memorials Ordinance 1928 in the Territory’s first nomenclature gazette, dated 20 September 1928. Records held by the ACT Place Names Unit in EPSDD show that it was the Chief Commissioner of the Federal Capital Commission, Sir John Butters, who proposed the commemoration of Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, 1st Earl Haig of Bemersyde. It is likely that this proposal followed immediately after the death of Haig in January 1928.

The ACT Government has received occasional feedback that the name Haig Park is inappropriate as it commemorates Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, the Commander of the British Expeditionary Force during World War I. The success of Field Marshal Haig’s military career is contested, with significant criticism of the Commander’s military strategies. Some historians consider that Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig’s relentless pursuit of victory came at a huge cost of life, and as a consequence had a role as architect of some of the greatest slaughters.

The Government has received correspondence and has noted the renaming of Haig Park being the subject of local media interest through articles, letters to the editor and opinion pieces. Redacted versions of this correspondence was provided to the Committee to fully inform their consideration of the matter before providing advice.

There have been no complaints made through the Access Canberra complaints portal since the 2016 (when the portal became operational).

It is also noted that this is not a new issue and has been considered by previous Committees. Most recently, in 2014, the Committee recommended retaining the park name and supported a project to prepare new interpretative signage that told the contested history of Haig’s wartime service.

The ACT Government unsuccessfully attempted to make contact with a representative of the Haig family.
Haig Park Place Plan—City Renewal Authority (CRA)—Community Engagement

Community engagement for the Haig Park Place Plan was conducted in three phases over approximately 18 months (early 2017 to mid-2018). Concern about the name of Haig Park was raised on very few occasions and was an issue of concern for very few people; it was raised on fewer than 10 occasions throughout the three phases of engagement.

The engagement included workshops, community information sessions, online surveys and face-to-face discussions and briefings. 160 people attended two community workshops. CRA spoke with more than 520 people in face-to-face discussions, including numerous community drop-in information sessions. CRA met with almost 20 stakeholder groups, visited more than 300 local businesses and had contact with approximately 450 people at community presentations and meetings.

The Haig Park Place Plan campaign reached more than 18,000 people via social media, email and letter box. The CRA received more than 2100 pieces of feedback about the future of Haig Park: 720 people provided feedback via the ACT Government Yoursay website and via online surveys and received 227 email or written comments and submissions.

Below are some examples of feedback that raised concerns about the name of Haig Park. There has also been support from the public to retain the name.

Email/written submissions (extracted below as written)
“My suggestion is that we change the name from Haig Park to Monash Park in memory of Sir John Monash. Haig was incompetent and responsible for the deaths of many Australian soldiers. He used men as cannon fodder and was known as The Butcher. Monash, on the other hand, was strategic and clever and he valued the life of Australian men. We don’t need a beautiful park named for a hopeless British General. Let’s change the name to honour one of our own?”

“I’m glad to hear Haig Park will be upgraded—one of the things in need of change is the name. Field Marshal Haig represents the very worst about Australia’s relationship with Britain. He should not continue to be memorialised in such a central part of our capital. There are many Australian and British historical figures who would be more appropriate, such as Sir John Monash. I understand a change has previously been considered and rejected by the Place Names Committee (http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/push-to-remove-douglas-haigs-name-from-park-20140810102j2t.html). Now might be a good time to seek the public’s views on the name.”

“I feel strongly that the name needs to be changed—Haig was not a good man and crazy to have such a significant parcel of land named after him and...”

Facebook
“Let’s start with removing Douglas Haig name from the park name.”

“Remove some of the trees to make it easier to see through and safety to walk through, and re-name it -Haig was an out of his depth WW1 general who contributed to the deaths of thousands of allied troops”

Discussion board
“Please change the name Haig Park—Haig was a general responsible for many deaths and...”
ACT Place Names Committee recommendation for Haig Park

Co-chair of the ACT Place Names Committee, Dr David Headon, provided a response from the Committee to item 2(d) of the Resolution regarding the request for the Committee to review the naming of William Slim Drive and Haig Park. A full copy of the response is provided at Appendix 2. The response is extracted below:

*Previous memberships of the committee have considered representations about the naming of Haig Park, which commemorates the influential and historically controversial, Field Marshal the Right Honourable the Earl Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Empire Forces in the First World War. Over the past one hundred years, Haig’s record and reputation have undergone intense interrogation.*

*The point was made at the committee meeting on 19 March that a historical perspective on the significance of Haig’s contribution, including his advocacy for returned service men and women as founding president of the British Legion, was available to the Canberra National Memorials Committee at the time the decision was made to name the park in 1928 – a decade after war’s end. It is considered significant that the public place name was determined in the first nomenclature gazette published by the Federal Capital Commission on 20 September 1928.*

*It is the committee’s recommendation that the historic place name remain and that the ACT Government investigate opportunities to provide additional interpretative signage in Haig Park (in both Braddon and Turner) to encourage community reflection and discussion about the First World War.*

**Options**

It is considered that the following options are available to Government. The Government should consider the precedent it may set for similar scenarios in the future when making this decision.

**Option 1.** No name change, but new signage detailing contested history  
**Option 2.** Co-naming of the park (as a geographical feature with a local Aboriginal name)  
**Option 3.** Change the name
Part E Summary of Options and Recommendations

This section of the report summarises the options and recommendations provided throughout the Review report.

The Review has specifically identified opportunities to:

- increase community participation in and visibility of, the process for naming public places
- ensure the Committee’s operations continue to reflect best practice governance
- ensure the Committee remains diverse in its membership and representative of the community.
- ensure the supporting guidelines, policies and processes remain up to date and best practice.

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations for the Committee Terms of Reference

| > The Terms of Reference should be updated to include a section on Powers of the Committee to reinforce the non-statutory and advisory nature of the Committee and outline its power/role in place names decision-making. |
| > The Terms of Reference should be updated to establish a clear mandate and responsibility for the Committee to advise the Minister or delegate on contentious place naming issues, including where commemoration of particular names may no longer represent community standards. This will strengthen the role of the Committee to collect and source evidence to support their advice to the Minister or delegate, including information held by Government. |
| > The Terms of Reference should be updated to outline the process for appointing the Chair/Co-Chairs, i.e. Ministerial appointment. The Terms of Reference should also consider whether there is a need for the appointment of a Deputy-Chair or acting arrangements should the need arise. This section should also detail any requirements or restrictions on who can be appointed to the role of Chair. |
| > The Terms of Reference should be updated to outline the operations of the Committee, including who provides Secretariat support, how often the Committee will meet, who can call a meeting and who can attend meetings, what conditions are required for a meeting to proceed (quorum) and how the Committee will capture and document its decisions/advice. |
| > The Terms of Reference should be updated to outline the process by which the Committee undergoes regular monitoring or evaluation of its performance, for example through the EPSDD Annual Report. |
### Recommendations for the Committee expansion of membership

- The membership section of the Terms of Reference should be amended to ensure representatives on the Committee reflect a broader diversity in age, experience and identity, including adding the following representatives:
  - A young person (under the age of 30)
  - A representative with a background in, or knowledge of, Indigenous languages.
- The Expression of Interest process for new Committee appointments should include a broad and multi-faceted communications approach which targets new members and seeks to reach a diverse range of candidates.
- EPSDD consider adopting a remuneration or participation payment policy to remove barriers to Committee participation and to recognise the expertise and contribution of Committee members.

### Recommendations for the Guidelines, including community standards, community input and capacity to raise concerns

- The Guidelines be updated to require the Committee to consider current community standards before naming a place after a person and to provide some guidance as to what such consideration would entail.
- Community input is sought on potential themes for new divisions, including nominating new themes and consulting on potential themes raised by the Committee.
- The Government invite increased community feedback on proposed names, seeking community input prior to the formal decision being made:
  - This could be in the form of a call for community feedback, noting the need to balance community input with the rights of families, such as through the Yoursay website.
- The Guidelines be updated to require the decision-maker to consider the result of any community feedback process on the draft name.
- Updates be made to the place names website and to the communications strategy for place-naming proposals and decisions so that the community is more aware and has the opportunity to become more engaged with the place-naming process.

### Recommendations for the consideration of community proposals and renaming

- The Committee develop a feedback/complaints process and publish it on the place names website. The process should detail how a member of the community can provide feedback/complaints, provide an online portal for providing the feedback and provide information on how the Committee will assess the feedback and advise the Minister or delegate.
- The Committee update the renaming policy to provide further criteria to assist the community in providing relevant information for the Committee’s consideration, and providing the criteria against which the Committee will assess community proposals.
- Improvements be made to the place names website to develop an online portal for
providing feedback to the Committee on naming proposals, renaming proposals and other feedback.

### Recommendations for William Slim Drive and Haig Park

#### William Slim Drive options
- **Option 1.** No name change
- **Option 2.** Change the name

#### Haig Park options
- **Option 1.** No name change, but new signage detailing contested history
- **Option 2.** Co-naming of the park (local Aboriginal name)
- **Option 3.** Change the name
Resources List

- **Public Place Names Act 1989**

- **Public Place Names (Naming of Public Places) Guidelines 2014 (No 1) (NI2014-643)**

- **Terms of Reference for the ACT Place Names Committee**:

- **Better Practice Toolkit**:

- **NSW Place Names Policy**:

- **WA Geographic Policy**:

- **UK honours and titles revocation**
  https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/9052828/Honours-Forfeiture-Committee-how-does-it-work.html
  https://www.gov.uk/guidance/having-honours-taken-away-forfeiture

- **Henry Rolland Park example**

- **National Memorials Ordinance 1928 (ACT)**

- **Yale University renaming policy and process**
  https://news.yale.edu/2016/12/02/report-outlines-principles-renaming-campus-buildings
  https://secretary.yale.edu/services-resources/procedure-consideration-renaming-requests

- **Final Report- Volume 17 Beyond the Royal Commission**
  Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse Attorney-General’s Department

- **Constitution of the Order of Australia made under the Letters Patent**
  https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/.../310d0e7a-7669-4313-bbc6-22e6e69565e
o **Media**

  https://www.abc.net.au/7.30/inquiry-to-expose-sexual-abuse-of-british-child/8309506
  http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2015/s4240947.htm
## Appendices

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Speaker

Mr Mick Gentleman MLA
Minister for Planning and Land Management
Legislative Assembly for the ACT
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Minister

PLACE NAME GUIDELINES

At its meeting on Wednesday, 28 November 2018, the Assembly passed the following resolution:

“That this Assembly:

(1) notes:

(a) the naming of many places in Canberra, including suburbs and streets, after historical persons;

(b) that the behaviour of some of those persons was criminal, reprehensible and/or abhorrent;

(c) the ongoing hurt caused in the community by the commemoration of villains as heroes;

(d) that the ACT Place Names Committee provides advice to establish policies for the naming of divisions (suburbs) and public places on Territory land in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT);

(e) the current role, responsibilities, membership and expertise, and operations of the ACT Place Names Committee is set out in its terms of reference which is available online; and

(f) the Public Place Names Guidelines, which are notified on the ACT Legislation Register, detail the established policies for the naming of new divisions, roads and other public places in the ACT; and

(2) calls on the ACT Government to:

(a) review the terms of reference and expansion of membership for the ACT Place Names Committee to ensure it continues to be representative of the diversity of Canberra as a modern, inclusive and progressive city;

(b) review the Public Place Names Guidelines to ensure that they meet with community standards, allow for greater community input and capacity to raise concerns;

(c) ensure that the ACT Place Names Committee considers community proposals relating to place names that no longer meet community standards;

(d) request the ACT Place Names Committee review particular non-residential place names that have been the subject of significant community disquiet, such as William Slim Drive and Haig Park, as a priority; and

(e) report to the Assembly during the June 2019 sitting period on the outcomes of this review.

Yours faithfully

Joy Burch MLA
Speaker

December 2018
Dear Mr Phillips

**ACT Place Names Committee and Guidelines Review**

I refer to your letter dated 22 January 2019 seeking the views of the ACT Place Names Committee (the committee) on the Assembly resolution dated 28 November 2018 and the specific actions listed in 2(a) to 2(d) of the resolution. Thank you for providing an opportunity for the committee to deliver a consolidated response to the resolution and contribute to the review of the ACT Place Names Committee and Guidelines.

The committee meeting on 19 March 2019 provided a forum for our members to properly consider the resolution and formulate a response. The overview and accompanying written information from your representatives, James Bennett and Sarah Young, has assisted the committee to understand the context and background to the review. The meeting particularly appreciated the message that the Minister continues to value the committee’s significant expertise and the positive contribution our members bring to place naming in the ACT.

The committee has considered each part of the resolution and responded accordingly:

**Resolution 2(a):** Review the terms of reference and expansion of membership for the ACT Place Names Committee to ensure it continues to be representative of the diversity of Canberra as a modern, inclusive and progressive city.

It is the committee’s view that the current terms of reference offer flexibility to ensure the membership can represent the diversity of Canberra as a modern, inclusive and progressive city. It is our understanding that the Minister can establish the membership according to the range of expertise and diversity provided by applicants responding to the expression of interest and also, through consultation undertaken in accordance with the ACT Government’s committee appointment guidelines and governance principles. There is no minimum or maximum number of members specified in the terms of reference.

The current committee was appointed by the Minister in October 2017 following a publicly advertised expression of interest process. The membership comprises the Surveyor-General of the ACT, a representative of the National Capital Authority, two representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and eight others, all having a connection and commitment to the ACT.
The appointed members have experience or expertise in disciplines covering Australian history, Australian heritage, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture, anthropology, archaeology, cultural diversity, town planning, authoritative addressing and media.

It is the committee’s view that the specific appointment of a young adult person, with relevant experience, would bring another perspective to the membership and provide for the views of younger people in the community to be particularly considered in the place names process.

Resolution 2(b): review the Public Place Names Guidelines to ensure that they meet with community standards, allow for greater community input and capacity to raise concerns; and Resolution 2(c) ensure that the ACT Place Names Committee considers community proposals relating to place names that no longer meet community standards.

As raised in correspondence dated 26 November 2018, the committee has concerns about the phrase “…community standards...”. How does one generation determine community standards as opposed to another?

The committee is cognisant of community sensitivities and will continue to advocate for new place names which the members can reasonably presume will be acceptable to the community at the time the naming determination is made. This commitment is supported by the Public Place Names (Naming of Public Places) Guidelines 2014 (No 1) which provide for “the desirability for the totality of public place names in the ACT to be reflective of diverse cultural situations” and for the avoidance of “derogatory or discriminatory terms or terms in poor taste”.

The committee believes changes to the ACT Place Names website could improve existing opportunities for the community, both locally and nationally, to nominate names and/or to raise concerns in relation to a commemorated place name.

In relation to the community raising concerns, it is important that consideration is also given to the possible hurt caused to families whose commemorated family member could be subject to community scrutiny for alleged indiscretions (real or perceived) which could result in protracted public debate.

The committee recommends improving the community engagement process by developing criteria to require proponents to substantiate any request to revisit the naming of a division and/or public place by providing strong reasons, supported by rigorous evidence. This would assist the committee to investigate requests made in light of further research, controversy or contemporary opinion and facilitate timely advice to the Minister about whether a place name should be revoked or retained.

The committee may also recommend further information for the particular ACTmapi place name citation to additionally describe the commemorated person’s historical legacy and encourage reflection and discussion in the community.
Resolution 2(d): Review particular non-residential place names that have been the subject of significant community disquiet, such as William Slim Drive and Haig Park, as a priority.

**William Slim Drive**

The committee has been generally made aware of the allegations raised concerning the 13th Governor-General of Australia, Field Marshal Sir William Slim. In 2014, the former committee agreed—

- to wait and consider the outcome of any legal action in NSW and/or any recommendations resulting from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse;
- that it would like to be on the front foot ready to respond; and
- if a decision is made to rename the road it should not be named after a person.

At the meeting on 19 March, the current committee was provided for the first time with redacted copies of correspondence and responses relating to representations concerning the naming of William Slim Drive.

The committee has noted that the Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse was released in December 2017.

The committee’s discussion has determined that it is not in a position to come to a view on the ethical, reputational and evidentiary issues current with respect to the name William Slim Drive.

It is the committee’s recommendation that the ACT Government consider formally writing to the Federal Government (Prime Minister’s Office) for advice on the substance of the allegations and the naming of the public place, commemorating a former Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia.

**Haig Park**

Previous memberships of the committee have considered representations about the naming of Haig Park, which commemorates the influential and historically controversial, Field Marshal the Right Honourable the Earl Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Empire Forces in the First World War. Over the past one hundred years, Haig’s record and reputation have undergone intense interrogation.

The point was made at the committee meeting on 19 March that a historical perspective on the significance of Haig’s contribution, including his advocacy for returned service men and women as founding president of the British Legion, was available to the Canberra National Memorials Committee at the time the decision was made to name the park in 1928 – a decade after war’s end. It is considered significant that the public place name was determined in the first nomenclature gazette published by the Federal Capital Commission on 20 September 1928.

It is the committee’s recommendation that the historic place name remain and that the ACT Government investigate opportunities to provide additional interpretative signage in Haig Park (in both Braddon and Turner) to encourage community reflection and discussion about the First World War.
Further to this recommendation, Co-chair Jeff Brown, has confirmed that he and James Bennett met with the City Renewal Authority on 13 February 2019 to discuss opportunities for possible upgrades to the park signage to provide a fuller account of Haig’s leadership of the Australian forces. The City Activation team has confirmed it will wait for the outcome of the review before determining any work required in relation to the naming and/or signage of the park.

On behalf of the committee, I look forward to learning the outcomes of the ACT Place Names Committee and Guidelines Review. I hope it will identify opportunities to build on the existing strong place names processes in the ACT to provide for the commemoration of names into the future reflecting our diverse and inclusive community, both locally and nationally.

Yours sincerely

Dr David Headon
Co-chair
ACT Place Names Committee
28 March 2019
The scope of the review of the ACT Place Names Guidelines was outlined in the Assembly Resolution passed on Wednesday 28 November 2018. This document describes how the ACT Government will assess and review each item of the Resolution.

Scope

The scope of the review of ACT place name guidelines was outlined as follows;

(a) review the terms of reference and expansion of membership for the ACT Place Names Committee to ensure it continues to be representative of the diversity of Canberra as a modern, inclusive and progressive city;
(b) review the Public Place Names Guidelines to ensure that they meet with community standards, allow for greater community input and capacity to raise concerns;
(c) ensure that the ACT Place Names Committee considers community proposals relating to place names that no longer meet community standards;
(d) request the ACT Place Names Committee review particular non-residential place names that have been the subject of significant community disquiet, such as William Slim Drive and Haig Park, as a priority; and
(e) report to the Assembly during the June 2019 sitting period on the outcomes of this review.

Table of scope and method

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scope item identified in the Resolution</th>
<th>Method of review</th>
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<tr>
<td>a.1) Review the terms of reference for the ACT Place Names Committee to ensure it continues to be representative of the diversity of Canberra as a modern, inclusive and progressive city.</td>
<td>&gt; The review will use the ACT Government’s Better Practice Toolkit, an online resource to assist with managing the operation of ACT Government Boards and Committees, to review the terms of reference for the ACT Place Names Committee.</td>
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<td>a.2) Review the expansion of membership for the Committee to ensure it continues to be representative of the diversity of Canberra as a modern, inclusive and progressive city.</td>
<td>&gt; The review will use the ACT Government’s Governance Principles for Appointments, Boards and Committees, released in March 2017 to review the membership of the ACT Place Names Committee.</td>
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> Recommendations made will based on ACT Government’s Governance Principles for Appointments, Boards and Committees.
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<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Note</th>
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<tr>
<td>b.1</td>
<td>Review the Public Place Names Guidelines to ensure that they meet with community standards.</td>
<td>&gt; The review will assess the <em>ACT Public Place Names Guidelines</em> against a cross-jurisdictional analysis of place naming guidelines for meeting current community standards in other jurisdictions.</td>
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<td>b.2</td>
<td>Review the Public Place Names Guidelines to ensure that they allow for greater community input.</td>
<td>&gt; The review will assess the <em>ACT Public Place Names Guidelines</em>, website and the community engagement strategy against ACT Government best practice and a cross-jurisdictional analysis of community input practices for naming public places in other jurisdictions.</td>
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<td>b.3</td>
<td>Review the Public Place Names Guidelines to ensure that the community has the capacity to raise concerns.</td>
<td>&gt; The review will assess the accessibility of a complaints process for Public Place Names that members of the community feel do not meet community standards.</td>
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<td>c</td>
<td>Ensure that the Committee considers community proposals relating to place names that no longer meet community standards.</td>
<td>&gt; The review will assess the <em>ACT Public Place Names Guidelines</em> and the Place Names Committee Terms of Reference to identify a mandate and process for the committee to consider community proposals relating to place names that no longer meet community standards.</td>
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<td>d</td>
<td>Request the ACT Place Names Committee review particular non-residential place names that have been the subject of significant community disquiet, such as William Slim Drive and Haig Park, as a priority; and;</td>
<td>&gt; The Place Names Committee has been requested to review these names and provide input and options on the review items. The review will identify options for the Committee to consider the places names William Slim Drive and Haig Park. &gt; Recommendations will be based on engagement with internal stakeholders and a cross-jurisdictional analysis of community input practices for naming public places in other jurisdictions.</td>
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<td>e</td>
<td>Report to the Assembly during the June 2019 sitting period on the outcomes of this review.</td>
<td>A final report of the ACT Government review will be tabled during the June 2019 sitting period.</td>
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ACT Place Names Committee Terms of Reference

Introduction:
This document sets out the roles and responsibilities of the ACT Place Names Committee. It provides guidance on the Committee’s purpose, roles, responsibilities, operations, tenure and obligations.

Role of the ACT Place Names Committee
The Committee has been established to:

1. Advise the responsible Minister (or Minister’s delegate) on all proposals for geographic and division (suburb) names and the themes to be adopted for naming roads and other public places on Territory land in the ACT.
2. Advise the ACT Place Names officers on proposed special commemorations or matters brought before members at committee meetings or by email.
3. Consider and advise on place name issues that arise from time to time.
4. Review proposed names for new roads and other public places and provide guidance to the Place Names officers as required.

Responsibilities of the ACT Place Names Committee

5. To assess the suitability of eminent Australians and Australiana, or things characteristic of Australia, for commemoration in ACT nomenclature.
6. When selecting or endorsing draft division or public place names, the Committee must consider the provisions of the Public Place Names Act 1989 and relevant addressing guidelines and standards.

Membership and expertise

7. Membership is appointed by the Minister, for a three year period, and may consist of:
   - a chairperson with relevant experience
   - the Surveyor-General of the ACT
   - a representative with an understanding of local heritage
   - representatives with a background in, or knowledge of, Australian history (local and/or national)
   - a representative from the local media
   - a representative with a multicultural background
   - an Indigenous representative
   - a representative of the National Capital Authority.
Membership of the Committee is on a voluntary basis. There is no minimum or maximum membership and two or more people can be appointed to fulfil each category.

**Operation of the Committee**

8. The Committee will meet when convened by the chair, but at least twice a year.

9. Members will be expected to provide advice on place names matters via email on a regular basis.

10. Members may be called upon occasionally to speak publicly on behalf of the Committee. Depending upon the subject this will be the most appropriate member as deemed by the Committee Chair.

11. Where the Committee is unable to reach clear agreement on a division name, or public place name, the Chair will either:
   - Defer the issue to the following meeting if time allows;
   - Suggest the issue be further researched and a decision made out of session;
   - Refer to the Minister with recommendations highlighting dissenting views; or
   - Reject the name.
Response from Slim family representative – received 16 April 2019:

Dear Jeff,

Thank you for sending me all the information and for your kind words about my father’s recent death.

My father chose not to engage in the allegations which were made against my Grandfather William Slim. I have taken soundings among my fellow grandchildren and we feel differently and so my thanks also for asking me to respond to the issues that have been raised about the street re-naming under discussion. We have born the pain of these public allegations and their indignity with patience and silence until now.

Before I address the allegations I wish to emphasise 2 points:

1. I do not wish, nor have the ability to comment on the change of street names in Australia. That is a matter for Australians. However, if the street name is to be changed as a result of the allegation of child abuse against our Grandfather by less than a handful of people, my family would object in the strongest possible terms.

2. I attach a summary of our Grandfather’s track record with Australia. I do this to show that our Grandfather was held in genuine respect by Australians for his hard work and contribution to Australia. The decision to name a street after him was based on merit and recognition and was not a mere token or formality.

The allegation was made against my Grandfather in 2008, 50 years after it was alleged it took place and nearly 40 years after he died in 1970.

It is easy to run around defaming a dead man, but much harder to prove such allegations. Like everyone else that knew my Grandfather, I do not believe the allegation is correct.

The experience of those that attended the Fairbridge Farm School in the 1950s was extreme and inhumane. I fully support the attempts to expose the wrongs of such a system and to ensure they never happen again.

But the specific accusations against my Grandfather need to be treated with much more scrutiny, both psychologically and legally. This attack on my Grandfather’s reputation is disputed by all those who knew him with complete conviction it has been made incorrectly.

We also know a significant amount today about the profile of child abusers and none of these characteristics fit with my Grandfather’s personality or lifestyle. And, of course, they are more easily made when someone is dead especially if they are long dead and the asserted date of the incident was even longer ago. We only have the word of two or three people for all this. Quite simply, this is not enough.

There is perhaps much opportunism to have a sensational personal peg on which to hang a story of systemic institutional abuse. It has helped the wider cause of the legitimate class
action to have a big name at the centre of the campaign, and so perhaps conflate a few memories into a record of events that would not stand up in a court of law. We know from recent similar high-profile cases in England that survivors of abuse, like everyone else, are not good at personal identification especially if the alleged incident took place when they were a very young child. In many of these cases the Claimant’s testimony has proven false and their motives suspect demonstrating such allegations cannot be taken at face value by state authorities.

I hope those who suffered at the Fairbridge Farm School get the justice they deserve for the suffering they have endured. I hope the people who have made the allegation against my Grandfather might also work with a professional forensic expert to reach very honestly into their memories and conscience to make sure that the accusations they are making are absolutely right. There is much emotion but little evidence.

Obviously I was not there so cannot make any factual comment but I can make 2 very pertinent observations:

1. My Grandfather was never left alone when undertaking his duties in the 1950s in Australia. He always had members of his staff by his side and if visiting somewhere his hosts would have accompanied him too. The only time he could have been alone when in an official capacity would have been in the lavatory and the allegation refers to a car........which would have been driven by a chauffeur.

2. I refer in the attached summary of my Grandfather’s association with and service to Australia, to the severe wounds he suffered at Gallipoli and on active service in other campaigns. He had to wear a body brace to ease the pain. Travel was agony for him. The suspension systems of 1950s cars mixed with the quality of the roads in those days gave him great pain. Although he always put on a brave face, he hated car journeys and when he arrived somewhere he could not wait to get out of the car. He would not under any circumstances extend the time he had to spend in a car but he might well have asked someone else to give boys a ride in his car while he went inside to undertake his official duties.

There is too little evidence (in fact nothing more than the word and distant memories of a couple of people) and nothing that would even get the case to court if my Grandfather were alive and able to defend himself. There is no proof or even significant justification for threatening the reputation of an outstanding, kind, gentle and loving man adored by his family, many of those who knew him and indeed by the men who fought in his army where he proved to be such an exceptional leader.

I have alluded to the current pattern of many similarly incorrect allegations that have been made against public figures in the UK in recent years. None of them go back as far as those made against my Grandfather and in most instances those alleged against were alive to defend themselves and prove their innocence. In some instances, it is the accusers who are now in the dock and many public officials have had to eat their words and they are the ones who have lost credibility and reputation.
I am not doubting terrible things were done to the unfortunate people who suffered in institutions like those set up in the 1950s. But whereas it suits the cause of my Grandfather’s accusers to have the reputation of a famous man threatened, the most charitable thing I can say about their allegations made approximately 50 years later is that they are a case of mistaken identity. I hope the ACT Assembly will recognise the fragility of these allegations against Bill Slim.

Yours sincerely,

Mark,

The Viscount Slim
RELATIONSHIP WITH AUSTRALIANS

• Bill Slim first encountered Australians when he fought alongside them in the First World War where he admired their courage in battle. He began that war as a cadet in Birmingham OTC and was soon made a junior officer due to the shortages of manpower and posted to the front at Gallipoli. He was in the trenches and during a defensive action where he had described the situation as hopeless, his request for permission to withdraw was refused by his commanding officer (he kept and I have seen the pencil written request to his commanding officer asking for permission to withdraw with the words ‘PERMISSION REFUSED’ written across it). He was subsequently so severely wounded he was assumed dead but when he was spotted twitching he was transported back to England on a hospital ship and it took over a year for him to recover. He had been shot through a lung the bullet exiting through his shoulder which shattered. He was again wounded twice more in the Second World War, once severely in the lower back by the machine gun of an Italian fighter aircraft and he suffered pain and mobility issues throughout his life due to these wounds.

• In the Second World War he found himself in Sudan and Ethiopia fighting the Italians before being transferred to Burma to command the defence against the Japanese invasion. This resulted in a significant defeat for the British and their allies but Bill Slim reformed and developed the Allied Army into the biggest Commonwealth Army of all time (over one million personnel at its peak) constituting 26 different countries/nationalities all under his command, including Australian units. It was the first genuinely multi-cultural army of the modern age and it represented the largest land army to fight the Japanese during the Second World War. It absorbed and crushed a huge amount of Japanese resources which could have been used to attack Australia and this great army was eventually victorious and along with its American allies and the great efforts of Australians themselves, played a significant role in helping Australia avoid invasion.

• After the Second World War, Bill Slim was invited to be Governor General of Australia. He loved Australia and was totally committed to and popular with Australians in this role to the extent that he was asked by the Australian Government to serve a second term - a rare honour and recognition of the respect in which he was held by Australians.