

2022

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

TENTH ASSEMBLY

**Report No. 5 of the Standing Committee on Economy and
Gender and Economic Equality - Inquiry into memorialisation
through public commemoration - Government Response**

Presented by
Mick Gentleman MLA
Minister for Planning and Land Management
December 2022

Introduction

The ACT Government is committed to promoting equality and diversity in the people commemorated through public memorialisation. The report tabled by the Standing Committee for Economy and Gender and Economic Equality is welcomed. Report No. 5 has identified opportunities for government action to promote the public recognition of women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people of diverse backgrounds, non-binary people, gender diverse people and people from LGBTIQ+ communities.

Recommendations

No.	Recommendations
Recommendation 1	<p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide an update to the Legislative Assembly, by the first sitting week of 2023, on names suggested for future commemoration, after consultation with key stakeholders such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, the ACT Office for Women, and the ACT Office of LGBTIQ+ Affairs.</p> <p>Agreed</p>
Recommendation 2	<p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide an update to the Legislative Assembly, by the first sitting week of 2023, on the implementation of recommendations arising from the ACT Place Names Committee and Guidelines Review.</p> <p>Agreed in principle</p>
Recommendation 3	<p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conduct an education campaign to increase awareness on how nominations for public memorialisation can be made.</p> <p>Agreed in principle</p>
Recommendation 4	<p>The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop a strategy for addressing the historical discrepancy and legacy of this discrepancy in street and suburb naming conventions in the ACT. In doing so, the ACT Government should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• conduct a review of all its street and suburb names and identify where the imbalances exist;• ensure all future naming of streets and suburbs adhere to the latest policy and guidelines to reflect on these historical discrepancies; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> report annually on new street and suburb names implemented across the ACT to show adherence to the latest policy and guidelines.
	Noted
Recommendation 5	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review existing suburb names with a view to co-naming where possible to include women, LGBTIQ+ people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
	Agreed
Recommendation 6	The Committee recommends that, for all new and replacement signage, the ACT Government investigate the cost of adding information about individuals on signage where they have a suburb or a street named after them, and if the cost is not prohibitive, that these changes be made.
	Noted
Recommendation 7	The Committee recommends that, for existing signage where suburbs and streets are named after individuals, the ACT Government add QR codes with relevant historical and biographical information.
	Not agreed
Recommendation 8	The Committee recommends the ACT Government look into the history of Mt Ainslie and, if appropriate, erect a sign explaining the history of 'women's business' in Aboriginal culture and the significance this has for Mt Ainslie.
	Agreed in principle
Recommendation 9	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide an update to the Legislative Assembly, by the first sitting week of 2023, on the commissioning of future public artwork commemorating women, LGBTIQ+ people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
	Agreed
Recommendation 10	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government establish memorials at local shops throughout Canberra prioritising recognition of members of the local community as part of the project.
	Noted
Recommendation 11	The Committee recommends that the ACT Government establish a mechanism for the nomination of community members who have not yet been recognised for their work, so that more members of the ACT community who have provided great service but may not be as visible, are considered in memorialisation decisions.

Noted

Recommendation 12 The Committee recommends that the ACT Government commission Cathy Weizmann to produce a bust of Rosemary Dobson to be erected in Poet's Corner.

Noted

ACT Government Response to the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality Report No. 5 – Inquiry into memorialisation through public commemoration

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide an update to the Legislative Assembly, by the first sitting week of 2023, on names suggested for future commemoration, after consultation with key stakeholders such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, the ACT Office for Women, and the ACT Office of LGBTIQ+ Affairs.

Response

AGREED IN PRINCIPLE

The ACT Government is committed to celebrating and recognising the diversity of an inclusive Canberra. There are a range of policies and processes that support this. This includes directions provided by Minister Gentleman, prior to the Committee's inquiry, to the ACT Places Names Advisory Committee to focus on the contribution made by women, members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, Canberrans from culturally and linguistically diverse background and other groups that form the fabric of the city.

Recognition of the groups identified by the Committee, include commemoration of Wiradjuri Elder, Mr Jimmy Clements, who is honoured in the Division of Bonner through the naming of Jimmy Clements Crescent. Place names determined more recently commemorate the names of distinguished Aboriginal artists including Dr Gloria Thancoupie AO and Mrs Sally Gabori; Mr Percy Jackonia, a founding member of the Bangarra Dance Theatre; Ms Helen Tsongas, local arts administrator and actor; Mr Wolfgang Sievers AO, architectural photographer and Ms Gertrud Bodenwieser, dancer and choreographer. Current YourSay community engagement invites Canberrans to nominate female defence personnel for consideration for posthumous commemoration in a Campbell park name.

Opportunities to commemorate the personal names nominated in the Inquiry Report will continue to be researched by the ACT Place Names Advisory Committee in consultation with the families of each person and other stakeholders.

The Government will endeavour to meet the request of the Committee to provide an update in the first sitting week of 2023. This will be subject to consultations. The Government is mindful of cultural practices and sensitivities and does not wish to commit to specific timeframes ahead of the consultations. The Government will engage respectfully with the groups and provide an update only after appropriate permissions have been provided.

As part of its consultations the Government will also engage the ACT Office for Multicultural Affairs to identify prospective names for future commemoration.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide an update to the Legislative Assembly, by the first sitting week of 2023, on the implementation of recommendations arising from the ACT Place Names Committee and Guidelines Review.

Response

AGREED

An update will be provided to the Legislative Assembly in the first sitting week of 2023.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government conduct an education campaign to increase awareness on how nominations for public memorialisation can be made.

Response

AGREED IN PRINCIPLE

A whole of government, coordinated campaign will be investigated to raise awareness of all opportunities provided across government to publicly memorialise people. Opportunities include the ACT Honour Walk, The Australian of the Year awards, ACT Women of the Year awards, place names, school names, artworks, memorials and building names.

The Government will investigate improvements to the ACT Place Names website and YourSay page and improve the communications strategy about place naming proposals and decisions. Consideration will also be given to improving the promotion of place names through social media and media opportunities.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government develop a strategy for addressing the historical discrepancy and legacy of this discrepancy in street and suburb naming conventions in the ACT.

In doing so, the ACT Government should:

- conduct a review of all its current street and suburb names and identify where the imbalances exist;*
- ensure all future naming of streets and suburbs adhere to the latest policy and guidelines to reflect on these historical discrepancies; and*
- report annually on new street and suburb names implemented across the ACT to show adherence to the latest policy and guidelines.*

Response

NOTED

As noted above, work has been well underway to improve the representation of diversity in the people commemorated through the naming of divisions (suburbs) and public places. This includes current and future research for new naming opportunities concentrating on the contribution made by women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from LGBTIQ+ communities, people from diverse backgrounds and people from marginalised groups.

As noted, Ministerial direction has already been provided to increase diversity in the naming of places. These are supported by considerations required by the *Public Place Names Act 1989 (Act)*.

The gender balance in each naming determination, and compliance with the *Public Place Names (naming of public places) Guidelines 2021 (the guidelines)*, is reported in the accompanying explanatory statement and notified in the ACT Legislation Register.

Changes are being implemented to include a summary within the EPSDD annual report to explain the gender balance and diversity of the people represented in new place names determined throughout the year.

Reviewing all existing street and suburb names would be resource intensive and yield little utility. As all official place names and addresses are intended to be enduring, any proposal to change an existing name requires careful consideration of the impact for residents, including possible addressing confusion, which can potentially delay the timely delivery of services, including emergency services.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review existing suburb names with a view to co-naming where possible to include women, LGBTIQ+ people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Response

AGREED

The ACT Government will review the determination of existing suburb names to identify opportunities to amend the origin information to include women, LGBTIQ+ people and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This review will build on existing work and have regard to the notable contribution made by the nominated person to the existence of Australia as a nation as required by section 4 (1) in the *Public Place Names Act 1989*. Existing co-naming proposals include current YourSay community engagement to inform the public about the Government's intention to co-name the Division of Spence. The proposal seeks to amend the division name to commemorate social and political reformer, Catherine Helen Spence, alongside trade unionist and politician, William Guthrie Spence, after whom the suburb was named in 1972. The Government is considering opportunities to co-name the existing suburbs of Lyons and Lawson to recognise politician, Dame Enid Lyons, and feminist, journalist and writer, Louisa Lawson.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that, for all new and replacement signage, the ACT Government investigate the cost of adding information about individuals on signage where they have a suburb or a street named after them, and if the cost is not prohibitive, that these changes be made.

Response

NOTED

The Government is investigating improvements to the ACTmapi Place Names website to provide additional biographical information on individuals who have streets or suburbs named after them. In addition, the Government will investigate the feasibility of providing additional commemorative signage for suburbs that commemorate women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Street and suburb name signs are traffic signs and are intended to provide a wayfinding function to aid in the safe movement about the road and footpath networks. The design of these signs is defined by Australian Standards (AS 1742) and is consistent nationally. Street name signs, in particular, are used mostly by motorists as route confirmation and any additional information would likely be distracting. Increased text on street and suburb signs will require larger sign faces which in turn require larger poles to support and place an increased burden on maintenance. Larger signage can also be a hazard, impacting road safety.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that, for existing signage where suburbs and streets are named after individuals, the ACT Government add QR codes with relevant historical and biographical information.

Response

NOT AGREED

As noted above, traffic signs are not the place for historical or biographical information.

Quick Response (QR) codes on kerbside traffic signs also present a potential safety and accessibility risk for the person accessing the code.

The Government will investigate technical options, including Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and other location based applications, which do not require a code to be physically attached to a signpost. This technology could provide opportunities for interested people to take an image of a street sign blade from a safe distance and instantly access the origin and significance information from ACTmapi.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends the ACT Government look into the history of Mt Ainslie and, if appropriate, erect a sign explaining the history of ‘women’s business’ in Aboriginal culture and the significance this has for Mt Ainslie.

Response

AGREED IN PRINCIPLE

The ACT Heritage Council has an existing nomination for a section of the Mount Ainslie foothills. The Heritage Council will assess as part of its business the cultural heritage significance of the place and will consult with the Aboriginal community to explore appropriate traditional naming. After this process is complete the ACT Government will be in a better position to consider culturally appropriate signage.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government provide an update to the Legislative Assembly, by the first sitting week of 2023, on the commissioning of future public artwork commemorating women, LGBTIQ+ people, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Response

AGREED

An update can be provided to the Legislative Assembly in the first sitting week of 2023.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government establish memorials at local shops throughout Canberra prioritising recognition of members of the local community as part of the project.

Response

NOTED

There is already capacity for local people to be memorialised. An example is the [Roadside and Urban Open Space Memorial Policy](#).

This policy provides guidance to Transport Canberra and City ServicesCCS staff and the community on the management of roadside and open space memorials placed on public lands in the ACT. Memorials in urban open spaces provide opportunities to acknowledge people and events that have contributed significantly to the history and development of Canberra. Roadside memorials allow people to remember their loved ones who have died on ACT roads.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government establish a mechanism for the nomination of community members who have not yet been recognised for their work, so that more members of the ACT community who have provided great service but may not be as visible, are considered in memorialisation decisions.

Response

NOTED

There are mechanisms in place across government to enable community members to be nominated for recognition and considered in memorialisation decisions. The ACT Honour Walk provides opportunities every two years to publicly recognise outstanding contributions by individuals and groups. Similarly, the Government promotes annual opportunities to nominate someone for an award within the Order of Australia and/or the Australian of the Year Awards.

In relation to place naming, there are suburb themes which focus on the commemoration of community service, including Jacka and Forde. There are other suburbs which offer opportunities to commemorate community service in a particular field, for example, the

future suburb of Kenny, 'Nurses and health administrators'. The ACT Place Names Advisory Committee research and work includes efforts to recognise Canberrans, including the 'quiet achievers'.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government commission Cathy Weizmann to produce a bust of Rosemary Dobson to be erected in Poet's Corner.

Response

NOTED

The ACT Government acknowledges the recommendation, including the contribution of Rosemary Dobson and that the existing busts at Poet's Corner were created by Cathy Weizmann. Any future commissions are subject to budget processes, must be consistent with the Public Art Guidelines, and, where they seek to represent an individual, be subject to agreement from their family. In 2013, Rosemary Dobson's work and contribution was acknowledged through the naming of a park in the Division of Deakin.