



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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

## **Submission Cover sheet**

Inquiry into memorialisation through  
public commemoration

Submission number: 008

Date authorised for publication: 15 February 2022

# Shane Mortimer

BCOUNS(Coaching) ACAP  
Namadji-Ngambri Allodial Elder

The Secretary, Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality, ACT Legislative Assembly, GPO Box 1020, CANBERRA ACT 2601. E-mail: [LACommitteeEGEE@parliament.act.gov.au](mailto:LACommitteeEGEE@parliament.act.gov.au)

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMY AND GENDER AND ECONOMIC  
EQUALITY

Shane Mortimer Ngambri Elder

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]


[REDACTED]

**Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality,  
ACT Legislative Assembly**

Dear **Standing Committee**,

Further to reading Minister Orr's article in the Riotact "*Is renaming Aspen Island really a win for acknowledging women's achievements?*" I realised that submissions were still open with the Standing Committee inquiry into memorialisation through public commemoration.

I was particularly encouraged by the petition, calling on this Government to: "*look to promote equality and diversity in the people we recognize through public commemoration; increase the **prominence of women in place naming conventions across the territory; and identify opportunities to increase the representation of women, especially of diverse backgrounds and First Nations** leaders in our public statues.*"

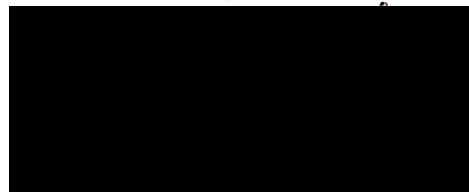
Consequently, I would appreciate that the committee investigates the Nadya Ngambri Reserve application. Please see attached,  application to the ACT Place Names Committee.

If you want to acknowledge a first nations women's achievements why not acknowledge the role of the 'First Women' who guided John Ainslie to the Limestone Plains and their daughter, Ju.nin.mingku, the progeny of the first interracial generation to take place in the ACT?

An application was lodged 7 months ago to the ACT Place Names Committee for the Nadya Ngambri Reserve. We have heard nothing back from the Committee. We have requested that the heritage and genealogy be fully reviewed by Koch, ANU and Troy, Sydney University et al as attached.

Recommendations are to acknowledge the application and naming of the Day Ngambri Reserve as per the application submitted and consider the renaming of Aspen Island as Nadya Ngambri Island rather than Queen Elizabeth 11 as proposed. As a direct relation of James Ainslie, I propose that Mt. Ainslie be renamed, Nadya Ngambri-Mt. Ainslie, Nadya meaning 'Mother' in the Nyamudy language of Canberra. I also propose that Corroboree Park be 'officially' designated as being: "Historically Important to the Ngambri People as our Recorded Corroboree Ground". Due to the international geological significance of Nadya-Mt. Ainslie, all of Nadya-Mt. Ainslie should be nominated for World Heritage listing.

Regards,



↳ Guumaal Ngambri Mingku  
Shane Mortimer  
Allodial Elder  
2<sup>nd</sup> January 2022

**Shane Mortimer**



## Proposal for Commemoration - Submission confirmation

Your submission has been successful. Please keep a copy of this receipt for your records.

Date and time

04 Jun 2021 10:12:27 PM

Reference code

YHGY7938

ACT Place Names

Phone: (02) 6205 0057  
Email: placenames@act.gov.au

## Proposal for Commemoration

### Applicant details

Title

█

Given name \*

█

Family name \*

█

### Contact address

Address line 1 \*

█

Address line 2

Suburb \*

█

State \*

ACT

Postcode \*

█

Contact number \*

█

Email \*

█

### Name details

Proposal 1	
Type of proposal *	
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Nominate a person	
<input type="radio"/> Nominate a non-personal name	
<b>Details of nominated person</b>	
Surname *	Maiden name (if applicable)
Ngambri	
First name *	
Nadya	
Date of birth *	

**Shane Mortimer**

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## **Nadya Ngambri Reserve**

### **The proposed Nadya Ngambri reserve**

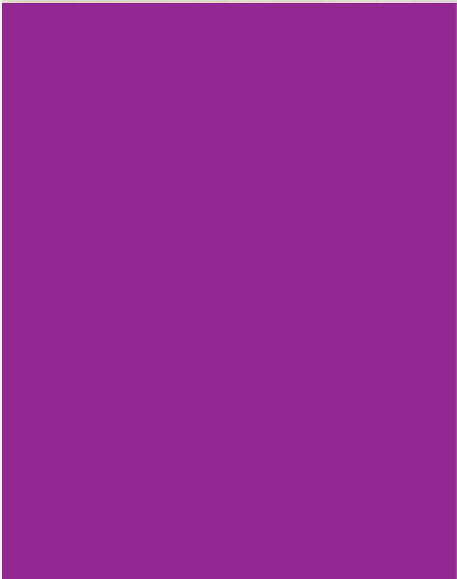
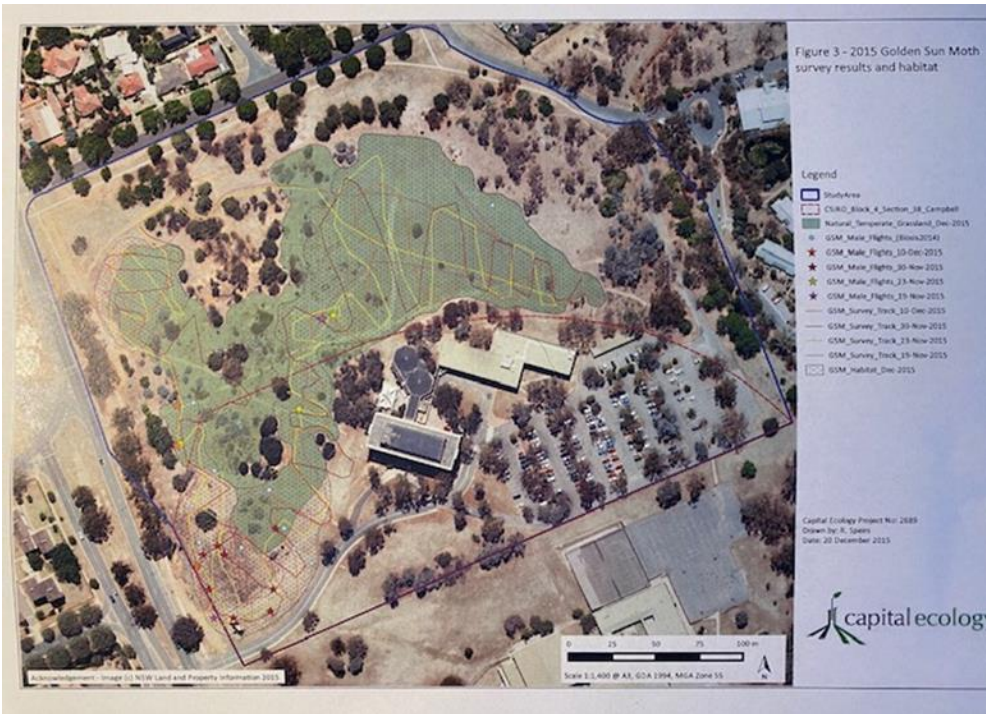
The Ainslie Volcanics site is highly significant. Shane Mortimer has a close personal affiliation with the site as his great, great, great grandmother led James Ainslie to the “Clump of trees”- Corroboree Park. Shane Mortimer has been campaigning for the last decade to preserve the Ainslie Volcanics, the native grassland and to achieve recognition of the Ainslie Volcanics, surrounding grassland and Corroboree Park as highly significant Aboriginal and European historic sites.

The heritage listing Shane Mortimer was hoping to achieve is to have the aboriginal significance of Dya (Mt Ainslie) formally recognised as a Women’s business significant site. The Ainslie Volcanics and foothills as Aboriginal significant Tors and outcrops used for markers, tool site, meeting place and Corroboree preparation site and Corroboree Park as an Aboriginal significant Corroboree site.

It is entirely fitting that the reserve that is part of the Ainslie Volcanics site, which contains the last remnants of the pre-European native grassland in contact with Mt Ainslie, bears the name of Nadya Dya Ngambri.

Some of these sites such as Mt Ainslie have had previous National Trust listing on the old National Estate listing but have been overlooked for their Aboriginal significance and this now needs rectification.

[http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place\\_detail;search=place\\_name%3Dainslie%3Bkeyword\\_PD%3Don%3Bkeyword\\_SS%3Don%3Bkeyword\\_PH%3Don%3Blatitude\\_1dir%3DS%3Blongitude\\_](http://www.environment.gov.au/cgi-bin/ahdb/search.pl?mode=place_detail;search=place_name%3Dainslie%3Bkeyword_PD%3Don%3Bkeyword_SS%3Don%3Bkeyword_PH%3Don%3Blatitude_1dir%3DS%3Blongitude_)





1

[1dir%3DE%3Blongitude\\_2dir%3DE%3Blatitude\\_2dir%3DS%3Bin\\_region%3Dpart;place\\_id=101565](#)

The small Limestone outcrop on the Acton peninsular is listed as Commonwealth heritage. While the Ainslie Volcanics site has two Geoheritage reports that state it is of National significance. The Ainslie Volcanics importance in the course and pattern of Australia's natural and cultural history is unique for both Aboriginal and European history. Dya Ngambri- Ainslie's guide and partner who Shane Mortimer is a direct descendant from the first union of a Ngambri women and a European man in the Canberra district. The site has served as an Aboriginal occupation site and European surveying- site due to its elevation as a viewing platform looking over the Limestone Plains. The Ainslie Volcanic's proximity to the Corroboree ground and the artefacts found on the site are also contributing factors to honour the site with the name Nadya Ngambri.

The unnamed reserve is a place of uncommon, rare, and endangered aspects of Australia's natural or cultural history. It is a great opportunity to tell the story of how Ainslie was brought to the Limestone

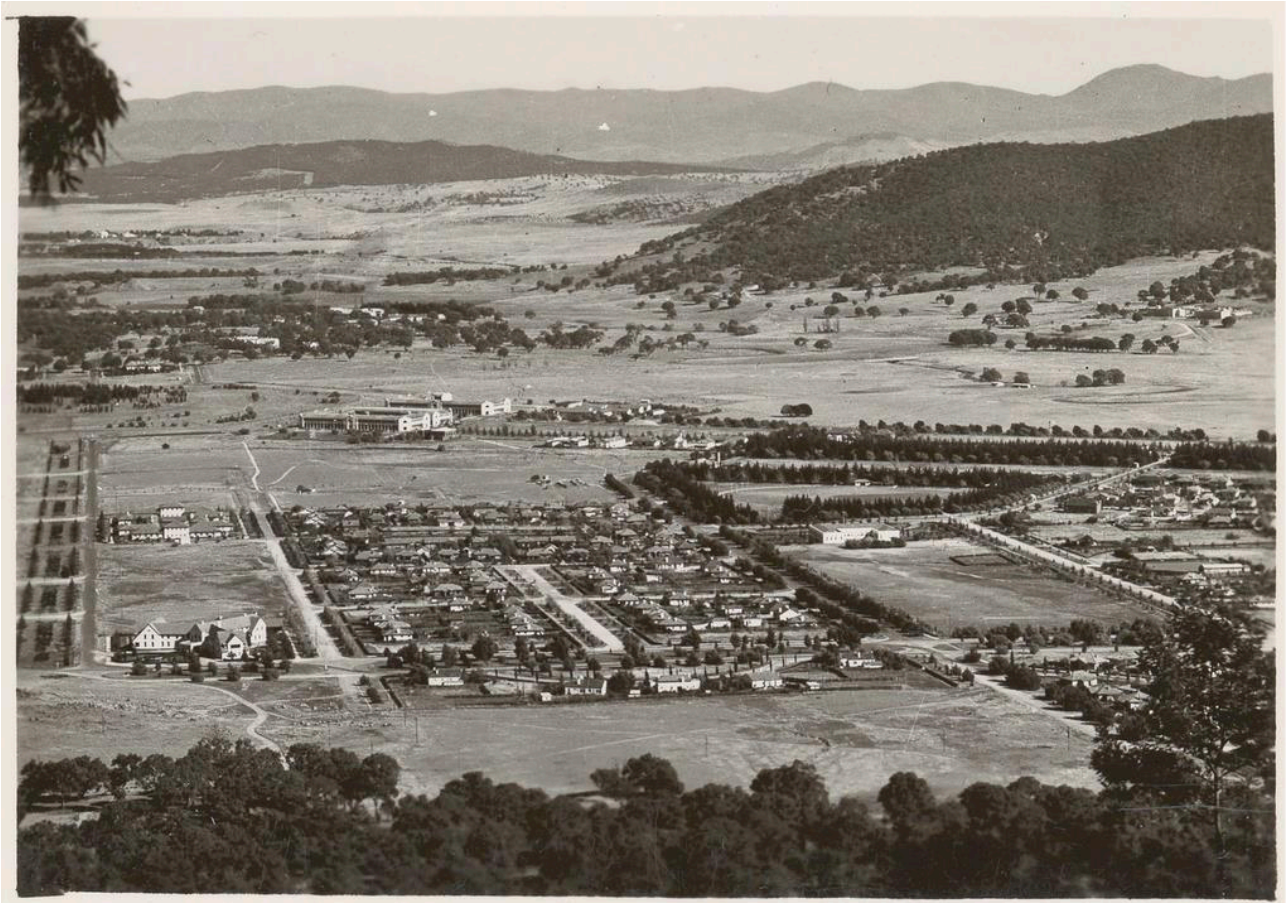
Plains, it's pre the formation of the ACT history and of course the indigenous history of 40,000 years previous.

There are endangered species on the site and the Dragon tooth outcrop is clearly shown to have been recorded (photographed) pre-1910. The last remnant grasslands of the treeless Limestone Plain in contact with Mt Ainslie and the bringing of James Ainslie and flock to the "Clump of trees" by Dya Ngambri are all extremely significant Canberra Heritage events as are the elevated geological volcanic outcrops.

**Navin Officer Report**







Tuff boulders

2

Unknown - [https://www.flickr.com/photos/national\\_library\\_of\\_australia\\_commons/8536980417/in/set-72157632944404780](https://www.flickr.com/photos/national_library_of_australia_commons/8536980417/in/set-72157632944404780)

**Photograph showing the view from Mount Ainslie, taken in the 1930s by an unknown Photograph The rocky outcrop is clearly seen opposite Olim's Hotel in the 1930's. The Tuff boulders can also be seen.**

Mt Ainslie and the Corroboree grounds history seems to be forgotten as emphasis has been put on other sites especially in the last 30 years. Robinson, in 1927, on the basis of "**definite local assertion**" identified a corroboree ground located on what is now known as 'Corroboree Park' in the suburb of Ainslie. As of 2017 this park lies within the heritage registered Corroboree Park Precinct.

Avery, S. (1994). Aboriginal and European Encounter in the Canberra Region. A Question of Change and the Archaeological Record. <http://www.kunama.com/custlaw/CUSTIND.HTM> Accessed 26 February 2014. Ref

[https://www.environment.act.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/1130462/Background-Information.pdf](https://www.environment.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0017/1130462/Background-Information.pdf)

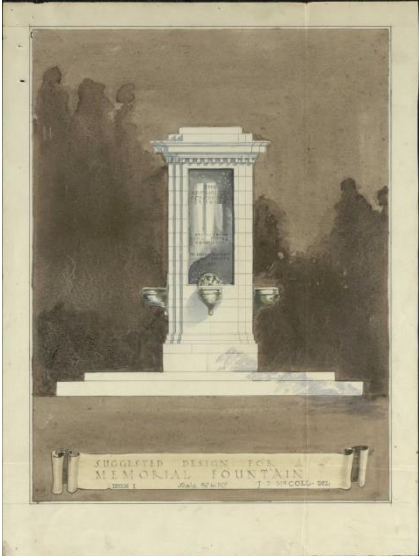
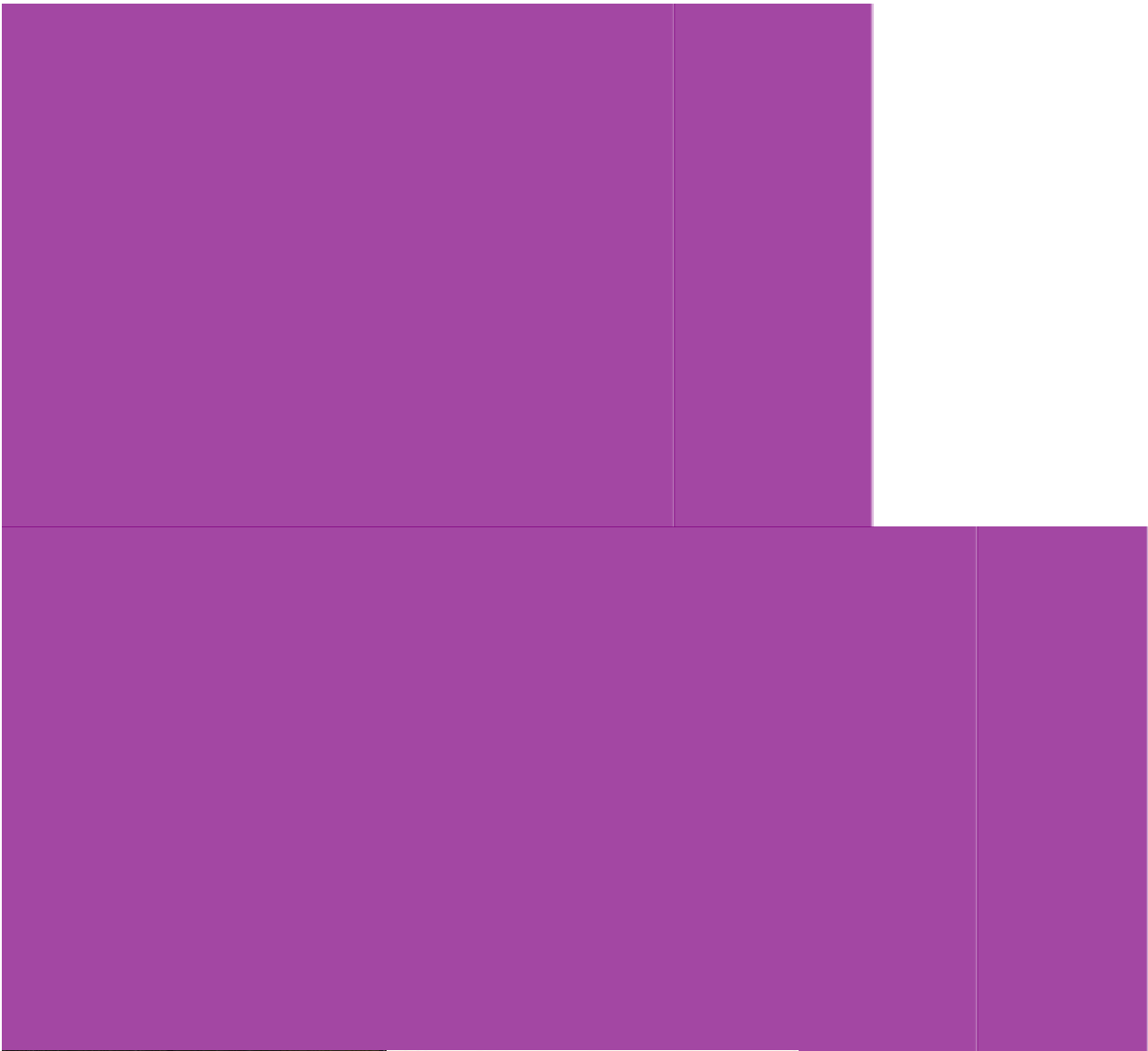
**Corroboree Park was named and established by the early settlers to give acknowledgement to the Corroboree grounds as shown by the inscription and proposed monument below:**

**1926 To mark the Aborigines Corroboree ground**

**Shane Mortimer**

To Shane Mortimer as a direct descendant of Nadya Nyamudy the “Clump of trees”- Corroboree Park is very significant. Nadya had one child to Ainslie, Juninmingku (Nanny) the first Nyamudy/Anglo to be born on the Limestone Plains.

From Voices of old Ainslie



ERECTED BY THE  
FEDERAL CAPITAL  
COMMISSION  
AND  
AINSLIE DISTRICT SOCIAL  
SERVICE  
TO MARK THE ABORIGINES  
COROBORREE  
GROUNDS  
1928  
"INSCRIPTION"

The suburb was named after James Ainslie, a Scott who was only in Australia for 8 years. Ainslie, the "first overseer of 'Duntroon Station' in Canberra who was employed by Robert Campbell in 1825 to drive a mob of sheep south from Bathurst 'until he found suitable land'; Ainslie chose the Limestone Plains (the Canberra district) and was overseer for eight years before returning to Scotland." [10]

James Ainslie was reputed to have camped in 1825 under gum trees at what is now Corroboree Park.[11] Iris Carnell, born in 1900 and one of the original inhabitants of Paterson Street in the 1920s, recounted in 'Voices of Old Ainslie' that her mother, Celia Tong, born at Lanyon in 1871, remembered as a little girl what is now Corroboree Park as a scene of Aboriginal corroborees. She said the aborigines used to sit around the tree now near the barbecues which has four trees growing from its centre.[12]

#### **The 'Corroboree tree' in Ainslie's Corroboree Park Photo: Tim the Yowie Man From Canberra Times**

"Near the park's hall is an ancient yellow box (Eucalyptus melliodora) growing as four secondary stems around a rotted-out main trunk which according to the nearby sign, "would have already been hundreds of years old when Captain Cook sailed up the east coast". I've been aware of this conspicuous tree, known locally as the corroboree tree, for some time but early this year my appreciation of the tree was bumped up to a new level when Ainslie resident Ken Charlton pointed out the 'face' in one of its secondary stems.

"An Aboriginal elder once told me it represents the face of his ancestor, an aboriginal girl who guided James Ainslie to camp here with Campbell's sheep in 1825," Charlton says.

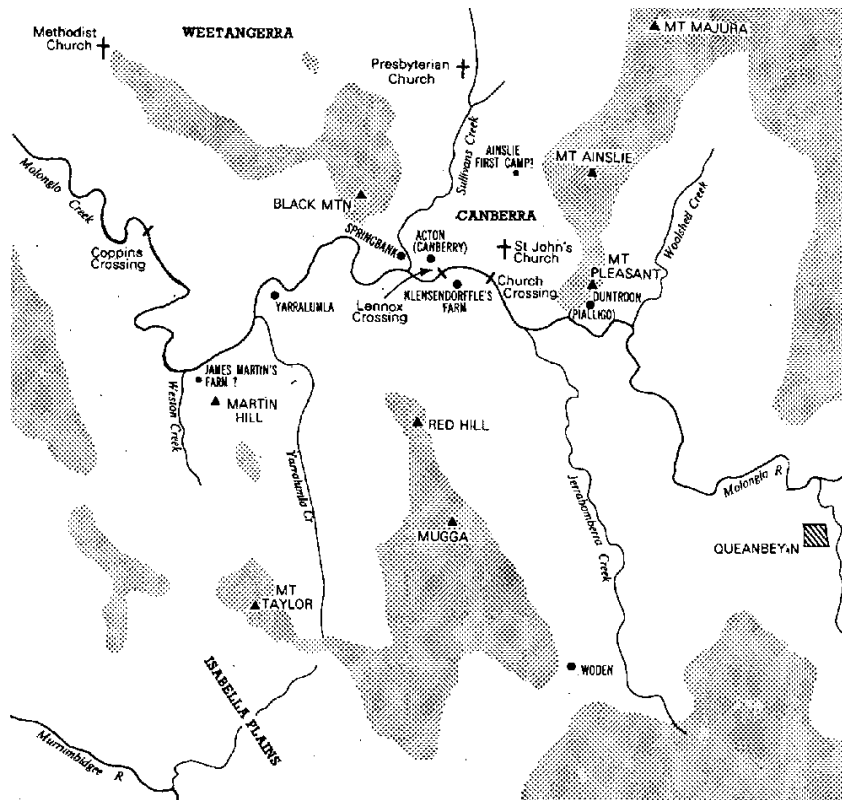
Have a close look, can you see the face?

**The Tree is ACT Heritage listed as a significant tree but the Corroboree grounds are not. This needs to be remedied.**

Source From Voices of Old Ainslie



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Ainslie's First camp shown in Map, By Ged Martin Source from Episodes ANU press of Old Canberra ,

The Clump of Trees clearly seen

One of Mildenhall's photos in 1927 showing Corroboree Park as the well-established clump of trees. 5



John Gale was told in 1850 by old timers that area that Ainslie's first camp was by what is now

referred to as the Corroboree tree located in Corroboree Park Girraween and Limestone .

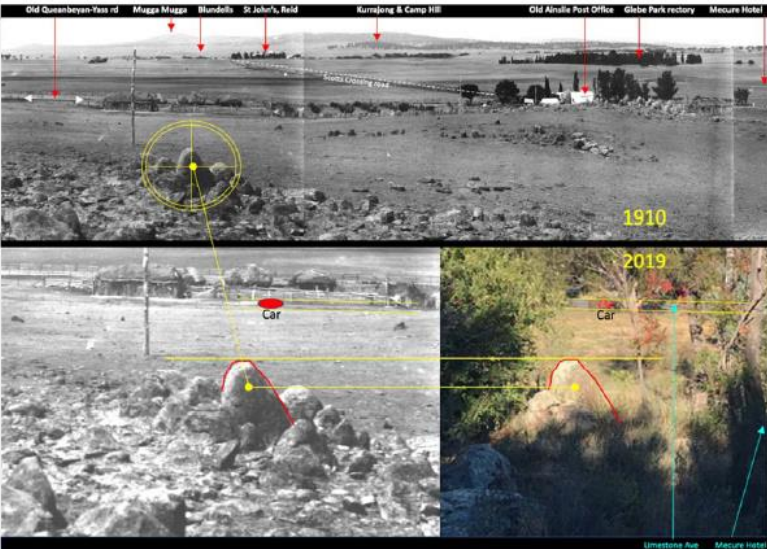
### **The need to preserve the Ainslie Volcanics and the last remnants of the once treeless Limestone Plain grassland.**

The confluence of drainage from Mt Ainslie and Black Mt has formed Sullivan's creek which can be seen as a line of trees on the floodplain between the mountains. Sullivan's creek was originally called Canberry (Ngambri) Creek and this along with the Ainslie soak would have provided some water and sustenance for people and limited stock away from the Molonglo River which would have been the major campsite especially during the warmer months. Mt Ainslie foothills were known as a winter camp where the Ngambri would shelter using the trees as windbreaks away from the chilly plains. The Ainslie Volcanics were a viewing platform and a source of sharp edges for the hunters – these activities are primarily considered as Men's business. However, the Tors themselves hold great Aboriginal significance and are markers to the nearby Corroboree grounds. Similarly to how Tony Marple has attached early European importance pre the formation of the ACT as below:




Source Sheaffe Papers 1910. Photographic panorama titled 'City series from rear of Canberra Post

Office, Federal Capital Site'. View is from lower slopes of Mount Ainslie

Submission no.	Submitter name	Submission
		 <p data-bbox="475 813 1256 857">Today the rock is among trees, shrubs and coarse grass on the development site. A close up is provided beneath my signature block. In the picture above the rock can be seen the present context. And I</p>

**Tony Marples request to have the marker stone preserved as per CSIRO site in DCP 1902**

no.	
	<p data-bbox="475 1061 1300 1133">represent the approximate location on the planning picture below. While I have not conducted an exact analysis of the Concept Plan to locate it precisely, it is very close to the northern-most of the two taller buildings near Limestone Avenue.</p>  <p data-bbox="475 1619 1300 1722">So in my view, the rock ought to be preserved in its present location. It is distinctive natural marker that has survived to the present day and it features in one of the best images of the Canberra site before the present city was built upon it. It is an almost unique landscape marker that allows people to locate themselves on the surface of pre-Griffin Canberra.</p>

source NCA ex CSIRO site DCP 1902

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**Aboriginal significance**

**Shane Mortimer**

The Ainslie Volcanics and dacite as a tool making site.

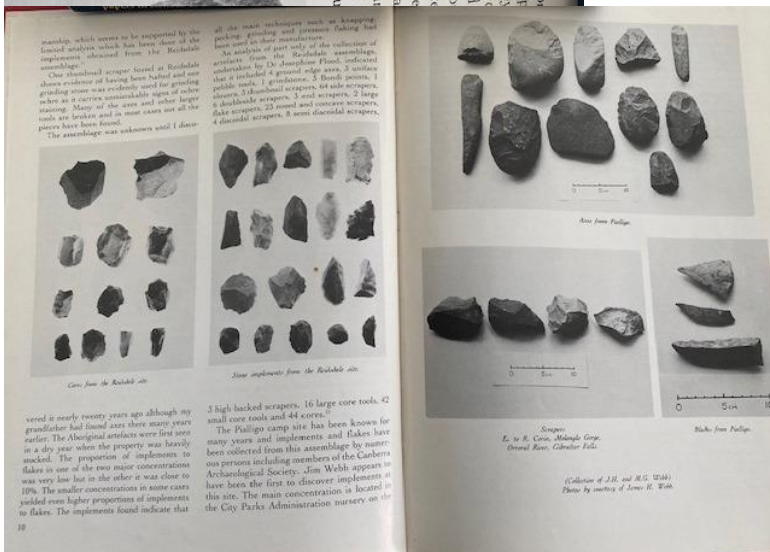
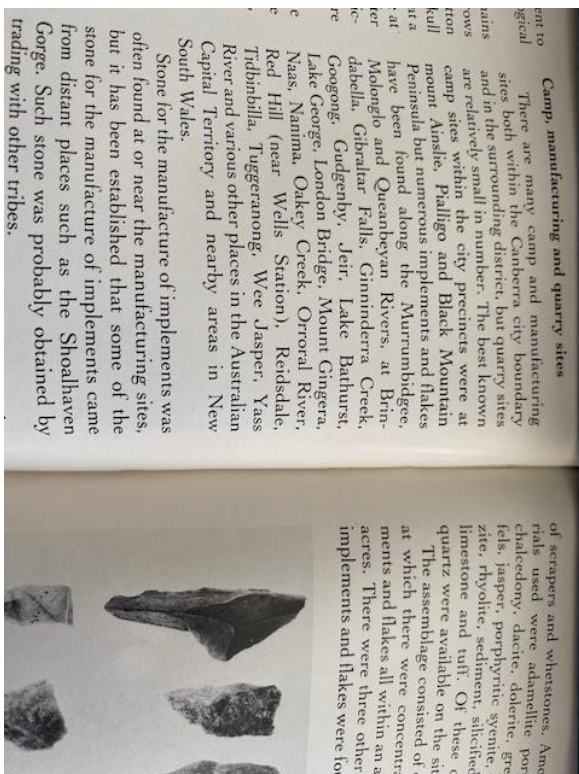
The dacite and other projectile point tool use and collection was reported by Gillespie. Gillespie quoted Mt Ainslie as one of the best known camp, manufacturing and quarry sites. As below:

**Mt Ainslie dacite used for Aboriginal implements**

**Gillespie also collected knapped dacite from Mt Ainslie as above**

Internationally it has been recognised that Dacite tools and projectile points have been used by indigenous groups.

“Many specimens of dacite are fine-grained and of relatively uniform composition. Ancient people have knapped them into sharp tools and worked them into utilitarian objects. When knapped into





projectile points, scrapers, and knife blades, they have an edge that is not as sharp as obsidian but is much more durable.”

Dacite Projectile Point: Fine-grained dacite with a uniform texture can be knapped into small tools and weapons. This Native American projectile point was knapped from black dacite. Found in southeastern Montana. Approximately 7/8 inch long and 1/2 inch wide

Source Geology.com <https://geology.com/rocks/dacite.shtml>

**Quartz scrapper assessed on site by ANU Indigenous archaeologist Dave Johnson**





**Sharp edged shard suitable for use as a scraper and cutting from the CSIRO site**



**Mt Ainslie projectile point British Museum**

[https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E\\_Oc1933-1115-61](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Oc1933-1115-61)

From British Museum:

“Among the hills near Mt Ainslie, at Canberra, the writer collected a few, and very few, flaked implements, showing careful workmanship of secondary finish. Several “crescents”, “thumb nails”, plain scrapers and scarifiers or “points” were interesting types, but they needed tedious searching to locate. Perhaps after six hours careful hunting on one site the reward might only be twelve artifacts.



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The majority of these specimens were lying on the surface, amongst a jumble of frost-chipped and gravel detritus on low ridges between dry creek beds which only flow after heavy rain.'

Commentary courtesy British Museum [https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E\\_Oc1933-1115-61](https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/E_Oc1933-1115-61)

Will H.P. Kinsela, 1934, Observations in the Goulburn and Canberra Districts in Mankind, Vol 1 No 8, pp.204-5.

### **European acknowledgement of Aboriginal significance**

Cecilia Tong as recorded by Louise Lyon in Voices of Old Ainslie, 1995 recorded the witnessing of Corroborees and indigenous groups gathering around the Corroboree tress in the then referred to "Clump of trees". The Clump of tress also contained one of Canberra's tallest trees as the area was provided water from a soak feed from Mt Ainslie, later affected by diverting water flows with civil works to prevent flooding.

The most famous is the protected ancient "Corroboree tree" in Corroboree Park, Ainslie (see pic next page). The nearby sign says it "would have been already hundreds of years old when Captain Cook sailed up the east coast". Its multiple trunks are in fact secondary stems growing around the original trunk which has rotted away. A heritage tour of Ainslie brochure by the National Trust (ACT) describes long-term resident Iris Carnall, who lived in a cottage overlooking the park for much of last century, recalling her mother, as a little girl in about 1880, witnessed Aboriginal people gathering around an elder sitting beneath that tree. The Park was believed to have been used as a corroboree (meeting) ground. It's also claimed this was the first campsite for Duntroon overseer James Ainslie when he arrived in 1825 (ABC 2015)

Cecilia Tong- Voices of Old Ainslie- from Lanyon station had witnessed Ngambri Corroborees on both Lanyon and Ainslie sites as below:

#### **Figure 37. Jack Tong, overseer at Lanyon**

**1908-1920, at his cottage (no date)**

Source: CFC photograph LD187



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Source Lanyon Conservation Management Plan (CMP)

<https://canberracamps.webs.com/electoral%20rolls/Electoral%20Roll%201928%20Outside%20Canberra2.pdf>

There are a number of Tong's buried in the Riverside Cemetery. Those buried are: Tong, Thomas died 30th October, 1925 aged 92. He lived at Cuppacumbalong and was born in England. He married at Queanbeyan 21st October 1868 to Mary Harkin. Tong, John Thomas, son of Thomas was a labourer at Lanyon. Tong, Mary Jane, wife of John Thomas, died at Lanyon 10th May, 1917 aged 42 years and 10 months. She was a daughter of Charles Bates of Williamsdale. **Tong, Cecilia** Wilden, wife of Thomas Tong died 7th August, 1948.

Source Lanyon Conservation Management Plan (CMP)

### **From Episodes of Old Canberra, ANU Press**

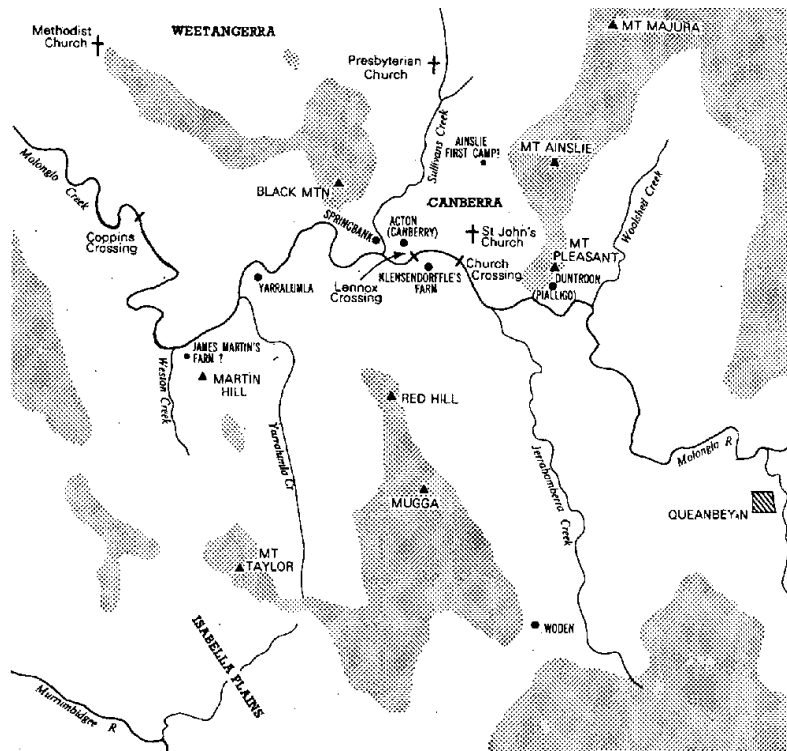
By Ged Martin

Ainslie First camp shown in Map below:



Figure 42. Ngambri/Ngunawal people posed at the 'canoe tree' at Lanyon for this photograph, probably to mark the opening of Tharwa Bridge on 1895. Nelly Hamilton is seated (R) with Dick Lowe behind her, and her husband King Billy at left.

Source: NLA: DeSalis papers



The importance of the Ainslie Volcanics, last remnant grassland and Corrobooree Park is clear

From Martin below:

their land. When John Gale came to Canberra in the 1850s, old timers pointed out a clump of gum trees to the east of the track which is now Limestone Avenue, roughly opposite its junction with Girrahween Street, and close to Corrobooree Park, appropriately enough in the suburb of Ainslie. It was there, they said, that Ainslie had made his first camp in Canberra — and it would certainly have been right on the eastern boundary of the land claimed by Moore's men. Duntroon itself, in the lee of Mount Pleasant (Bald or Cottage Hill in the old days), and closer to water, would quickly have seemed a better permanent site. Within nine years Ainslie had increased his sheep from a mob of 700 to a fine flock of 20,000 — plus thousands of others sold in the meantime. Another local tradition suggests that Ainslie lived with an Aboriginal woman at Duntroon, and it would be



pleasant to think that this particular romance began while sheep droving from Yass. However, Ainslie apparently returned to Scotland about 1835, abandoning his children, and presumably his partner. Several generations of interracial contact absorbed the half-caste Ainslies into the white community, and there may well be thousands of Australians today unknowingly descended from James Ainslie and his Aboriginal girl friend.

But the most effective Aboriginal adaptation to European society was the way they merged into it. Interbreeding began with the earliest white settlers in the 1820s: by 1844 half-caste Aboriginal people were already parents themselves. If they married Europeans their children would be only one-quarter Aboriginal in descent, and the next generation might have only one Aboriginal great-grand-parent out of eight. People usually talk as if the Canberra Aborigines melted away, but it would be much more true to say they melted *in*. Shumack refers to a half-caste woman called Nanny (possibly the Myambah mentioned earlier), who was believed to be the daughter of James Ainslie, the first superintendent of Duntroon. Nanny had eleven children, all of whom left the area. One of them, Sarah, married a farmworker called Richard Lowe, and they moved on in the 1880s. It is a fair guess that just as children were often not told that their parents had been transported, so Sarah Lowe's family never knew of her Aboriginal descent. And she was one of eleven children! In a country where people were highly mobile, where women started families young and five generations might be born in a hundred years, many thousands of Australians today



Mount Ainslie rises above empty paddocks. This photograph was taken in 1880. From National Library of Australia collection.

William Davis Wright was the authority for local Aboriginal life: he remembered them at Cuppacumbalong in the 1840s, but sadly Shumack, who arrived ten years later, records few of the same facts: by the 1860s the blacks had abandoned their traditional corroboree sites, had been squeezed off their hunting grounds, and were wandering from property to property, camping in humpies and begging what they could from the settlers. Wright admired them, not least for their ability to live off the country, and he was among the few settlers who bothered to find out much about them. The local tribe called themselves the Kamberra people, and their corroboree ground was somewhere close to Civic. Wright's description of the locality has puzzled many students, since he mentioned in the same breath Acton (Canberra Hospital), St John's church (Anzac Parade) and the old dairy at Duntroon.

**( Between Civic and St Johns is Corroboree Park and the Ainslie Volcanics)**

John Gale-was told in 1850 by old timers that area that Ainslie's first camp was by what is now

referred to as the Corroboree tree located in Corroboree Park Girraween and Limestone .

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*Canberra Companions* are published by the Australian National University Press as a contribution to the cultural, educational and recreational life of the immediate area served by the University. Titles available or in preparation include:

*Rambles around Canberra* by Allan J. Mortlock and Gillian O'Loughlin

*Tales and Legends of Canberra Pioneers* by Samuel Shumack

*Canberra's Embassies* by Graeme Barrow

*Fishing around Canberra* by Bryan Pratt

*Birds in your Canberra Garden* by Henry Nix

*Street Trees in Canberra*

*Undiscovered Canberra* by Allan J. Mortlock and Bernice Anderson

*The Australian National University – People and Places in a Landscape*

All from Episodes of Old Canberra

### **Griffin heritage survey mark on sections of the Ainslie Volcanics**



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**Photographed by the 1910 pre-Canberra survey team**

The volcanic outcrops of bedrock are quite distinguishable. This unique landscape holds early European pre the formation of Canberra significance and highly significant Aboriginal significance.

**Field study 13.12.20**

**The results of the field study show that the site is rejuvenating and the**

**comments were that it is a wonderful example of the pre European Limestone Plain grassland with over 40 native species that must be preserved.**



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**Brief Reconnaissance Survey of Native Vascular Plant Species Occurring in Grassland and Adjacent Rocky Outcrops in the Central Northern Half of the Ex-CSIRO and adjacent reserve site Campbell, ACT on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

Michael Doherty. Eucryphia

Botanical Consulting, Canberra.

#### Scientific Name

*Acacia implexa*  
*Acaena ovina*  
*Austrostipa bigeniculata*  
*Austrostipa densiflora*  
*Austrostipa scabra* var. *falcata* *Bothriochloa macra*  
*Brachychiton populneus* subsp. *populneus* *Brachyloma daphnoides* var. *daphnoides* *Cassinia quinquefaria*

*Cheilanthes sieberi*  
*Chloris truncata*  
*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*  
*Convolvulus angustissimus* var. *angustissimus* *Cryptandra amara*

*Cymbonotus* sp.  
*Daviesia mimosoides* subsp. *mimosoides* *Dianella longifolia* var. *longifolia*  
*Erodium crinitum*  
*Euchiton sphaericus*  
*Leucochrysum albicans* var. *tricolor* *Lomandra multiflora* subsp. *multiflora* *Melichrus urceolatus*  
*Panicum effusum*  
*Poa sieberiana*  
*Rumex brownii*  
*Rytidosperma carphoides*  
*Rytidosperma racemosum* var. *racemosum* *Sorghum leiocladum*

*Stylidium graminifolium*

*Themeda triandra* *Tricoryne elatior* *Triptilodiscus pygmaeus* *Wahlenbergia communis* *Wahlenbergia gracilis* *Xerochrysum viscosum*

#### Common Name

Hickory Wattle Sheep's Burr  
Tall Spear Grass Brushtail Spear Grass Corkscrew Spear Grass Red Leg Grass Kurrajong

Daphne Heath Rosemary Cassinia Rock Fern Windmill Grass Yellow Buttons Austral Bindweed Bitter Cryptandra Bear's Ear

Bitter Pea  
Blueberry Lily  
Blue Heron's Bill  
Star Cudweed  
Hoary Sunray Many-flowered Matrush Urn Heath  
Hairy Panic  
Snow Grass  
Swamp Dock  
Short Wallaby Grass  
A Wallaby Grass  
Native Sorghum

Grass Triggerplant

Kangaroo Grass Star Lily  
Dwarf Sunray Tufted Bluebell Sprawling Bluebell Sticky Everlasting

#### Notes

Rocky outcrops  
Grassland  
Grassland  
Grassland and rocky outcrops Grassland

Grassland  
Rocky outcrops

Rocky outcrops  
Rocky outcrops  
Rocky outcrops  
Grassland  
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Grassland  
Rocky outcrops  
Rocky outcrops  
Grassland – eastern edge  
Grassland  
Grassland – eastern edge  
Rocky outcrops  
Rocky outcrops  
Grassland  
Rocky outcrops  
Grassland – eastern edge  
Grassland  
Grassland  
Clumps occur in rocky outcrop above old quarry  
One only, east of rocky outcrop above old quarry  
Grassland  
Grassland  
Grassland  
Grassland  
Grassland  
Grassland – eastern edge

Overall, the grassland in the middle northern half of the site is in excellent condition. It is a small but representative example of lowland native grassland, with a good variety of native herbs and grasses. The clumps of

Other native species reported from the ex-CSIRO site in the Atlas of Living Australia but unsighted in this brief survey include *Crassula sieberiana* (Austral Stonecrop),

*Cynoglossum australe* (Austral Hound's Tongue), *Drosera* sp. (Sundew), *Hovea heterophylla* (Common Hovea), *Pimelea curviflora* (Curved Rice Flower), and *Plantago varia* (Variable Plantain) giving a total of at least 40 native vascular plant species for the grassland and adjacent rocky outcrop area. Moving from the centre to the edges of the patch there is greater disturbance and weed encroachment, the most common exotic species being *Aira* spp. (Hair Grasses), *Phalaris aquatica* (Phalaris), *Plantago lanceolata* (Plantain), *Trifolium angustifolium* (Narrow-leaved Clover), *Trifolium arvense* (Haresfoot Clover), *Verbascum thapsus* (Great Mullein), and *Vulpia* spp. (Fescues). There are also some small patches of *Hypericum perforatum* (St. John's Wort) and *Verbascum virgatum* (Twiggy Mullein) in the grassland area. Many other planted and adventitious native and exotic

*Sorghum leiocladum* are significant as this species is not as yet reliably recorded in

the Ainslie-Majura reserve.

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species occur on the block in adjoining areas but these were not the focus of the reconnaissance and have not been listed here.

**The existing MOU between the ACT Government, the Department of Environment and CSIRO about preserving the endangered species and grassland needs to be enforced. These preservation requirements need to be brought to the attention of the Federal Government and enforced by the ACT Government.**

From Maxine Coopers 2009 report:

<https://www.envcomm.act.gov.au/publications/investigations/investigation>

**CSIRO Headquarters (CC01) Conservation Category 2:** Complementary Conservation Site. Size: 3 hectares Natural Temperate Grassland, isolated from other patches of native grassland. Comments: This grassland site includes both National and Territory Land. The grassland site contains the endangered Golden Sun Moth.

A management plan, prepared by CSIRO, ensures no mowing occurs within the grassland area. Kangaroos are migrating from Mount Ainslie so are difficult to control. Current Threatening Process: At a critical (C) threshold from overgrazing by kangaroos. The steep slope predisposes this site to active and serious soil erosion, especially from the informal pedestrian and vehicular tracks that cross the site. Action: While there is a need to reduce grazing pressure by kangaroos, given the urban context, this is likely to be best achieved by reducing numbers strategically across the region

Please read the extract in the email below from the 2009 report and read Shane Mortimer's appendix 9 comments still pertinent today as they were 11 years ago.

[Appendix 9 \(pdf, 12KB\)](#)

Quote from Mr Shane Mortimer, of the Ngambri People:

Quote from Mr Shane Mortimer, of the Ngambri People

The entire Ngambri land area is a site of cultural significance. These grasslands fed Ngambri ancestors for over a thousand generations. Ngambri families have been buried in these lands for over 25,000 years. Well in excess of 500,000 Ngambri People form part of this land. Too much grasslands development has taken place in Ngambri Country, particularly the ACT section. The yam daisy was to Ngambri People, what corn is to American Indians or rice to Asians. Only a handful of yam daisies have survived in the ACT because of land development. The emu, koala, cod, platypus, brolga, bush turkey are no longer to be seen. We have witnessed the mass extinction of innumerable species in the past 200 years. The population of Ngambri People is indicative of the state of the land, but we are far from a spent force. In 21st century terms Indigenous Grasslands have more biodiversity and sequester more carbon per hectare than trees, and create the silicates that lock carbon into the ground for up to 20,000 years. Similar silicates to those that make opals. The once over-grazed Mulligan's Flat area, having been left to regenerate, is responding well to being left for two years now to do so, Indigenous grasses among other biota have returned. Areas where Themeda triandra (Kangaroo Grass) now thrive preclude serrated tussock. All Grasslands in the ACT must now be left to regenerate. The seed of Indigenous understorey is in the ground and will germinate if all sheep and cattle are removed and the land left to spell for at least five years. Future



The National Land is managed by the CSIRO and there is a



memorandum of understanding between the ACT Government, the Australian Government



Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and the CSIRO, which was signed on 7



September 1998.

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development in the ACT must be concentrated in existing urbanised areas and made attractive for residents to want to live there. Global warming is going to bring rising sea levels and severe weather conditions; and for this governments must be prepared. A high-tech, desirable city for a million residents, built to withstand the rigours of harsh windy weather, must be sustainably constructed on existing urban area, possibly over the top of existing commercial centres and Indigenous grass covered. What do you see growing in high-wind regions? Grasses! We must take a lesson from nature and consider shelter beneath the surface. The micro-organisms and root systems that support the ecosystem above far exceed the surface story in every way. Aboriginal People have an intuitive understanding of such matters. Ngambri People know this land better than any, as this is Ngambri land. 'Caring for Country' is essential for Ngambri future.

From Dr Maxine Coopers report in relation to the CSIRO site:

The National Land is managed by the CSIRO and there is a memorandum of understanding between the ACT Government, the Australian Government Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts and the CSIRO, which was signed on 7 September 1998. RE the need to:

"There is also a need to control pedestrian and vehicular access to prevent erosion. Review existing memorandum of understanding and ensure it is implemented."

**Shane Mortimer**

Now that the Aboriginal significance has also been identified on the CSIRO HQ site, the site needs to be incorporated into the adjacent land correctly zoned Hills, Ridges and Buffers and permanently conserved as part of the Mt Ainslie Nature Reserve.

## **In conclusion**

The facts are that Mt Ainslie, the Foothills, the remnant grassland and Corroboree Park are very significant heritage areas that need to be preserved. All Aboriginal groups agree that the mountain top is Women's Business. The foothills, volcanic outcrops, grassland and corroboree ground are all significant heritage areas for indigenous and non-indigenous Canberrans.

The interpretations of Men's and Women's business may be different within the Aboriginal community but that needs to be explored and studied further, especially by Aboriginal groups.

The pre-European environment left is the Ainslie Volcanics and grassland which is highly significant to the Mortimer family as direct descendants of Nadya Ngambri. It is well documented that Ainslie's flock was brought to the grassland. The last remnant of the grassland in contact with Mt Ainslie is all that is left of the once treeless Limestone Plain. It is fitting that the reserve be named after Nadya Ngambri.

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