LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMY AND GENDER AND ECONOMIC EQUALITY

(Reference: Inquiry into memorialisation through public commemoration)

Members:

MS L CASTLEY (Chair)
MS S ORR (Deputy Chair)
MR J DAVIS

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

TUESDAY, 24 MAY 2022

Secretary to the committee:
Dr L Kerr (Ph: 620 50136)

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

WITNESSES

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 10 am.

VILLIERS, MR NICHOLAS

THE CHAIR: I open the public hearing by the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality in its inquiry into memorialisation through public commemoration. Before we begin, on behalf of the committee, I would like to acknowledge that we meet today on the land of the Ngunnawal people. We respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and our region.

Petition 6-21, titled "Monumental women", was presented to the Assembly on 2 June 2021 and had 223 signatures. On 15 June 2021, the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality agreed to consider the particulars of the petition as part of a wider inquiry. The committee has received 16 submissions which are available on the committee website. Today, the committee will hear from 11 witnesses. The hearing today is being recorded and broadcast live on our webstream.

This morning we will hear from Mr Nicholas Villiers. Thank you for coming in today. I remind you of the protections and obligations afforded by parliamentary privilege. Could you please confirm that you understand the privilege implications of the statement, and let us know who you are.

Mr Villiers: I am here as a private citizen. I have read and I understand the privilege statement.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Do you want to give us a brief run-down of your submission?

Mr Villiers: Yes. I start by acknowledging the custodians of the lands we meet on, the Ngunnawal people, and any people who may be giving evidence today who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. I made a submission on behalf of Sue Salthouse, who was a very staunch advocate for the rights of women with disabilities and people with disabilities more broadly. Essentially, she dedicated most of her life to ensuring the human rights and social outcomes for people with disabilities and women with disabilities, and advocating for improvement in social outcomes for them. She was very loved in the Canberra community, and most people here would probably have heard of her. I appreciate the opportunity to speak for her today.

THE CHAIR: What was your relationship with her? Are you just aware of her work?

Mr Villiers: I do a fair bit of advocating for people in different minority groups in the community. For me, although I never met her, she was a bit of a mentor or role model that I looked up to. She showed me that advocacy was effective and that, if you believe in something, you have experience of something and you really try to demonstrate that to people, you can achieve great things.

THE CHAIR: Fantastic. What are some of the stand-outs that you saw her get

involved in?

Mr Villiers: She has done quite a lot. She was the Chair of Women with Disabilities Australia. She was involved with women in adult vocational education, the WAVE program. She was on the Prime Minister's advisory council to reduce violence against women. She advised on the NDIS initially. She was a lifetime member of the Nepal Australia Friendship Association. With respect to the University of Canberra Council, she did quite a lot. I admire the way that her life's work was to advocate for people with disability and social inclusion.

MS ORR: Mr Villiers, what would it mean for you to see Susan Salthouse commemorated? If there were a street named after her, or a school or a statue somewhere in Canberra, what would that mean to you?

Mr Villiers: A better question would be: what would it mean for Canberra and the community? I think it is important that we do not just name something after her; we should have some sort of justification or some reasoning behind it so that people can see it and think, "This is named after her because of the work she did." Often, when you have things named after people, people do not actually realise who the person was. That is something that sometimes gets lost.

Having Sue memorialised in some way would show people with disabilities in the community that they are respected and valued, that they can make contributions and that they are important to the fabric of our Canberra community. Having her somehow at the front and centre of that would be a very good way of demonstrating that value and that contribution to community.

MR DAVIS: Thank you very much for your time and for your submission. I am interested to learn, not just from you but from others who have made a submission, whether this is the first representation you have made to government or to the Assembly about your proposal—the person you would like to see memorialised—to get a better idea of what processes the government already has in place to receive these kinds of requests. Is this the first way you have let us know what you would like to do or are there other processes that you have engaged in as well?

Mr Villiers: For me, this is the first time I have done this sort of thing, in trying to get representation for Sue, but she does have the women's leadership grant, which was established by the ACT government. She was heavily involved with ACTCOSS and many other industry organisations, who all have a lot of respect and love for her. For me, this is the first time I have expressed this sort of desire.

MR DAVIS: Forgive me if this was covered before my late appearance: one of the other questions for this committee to resolve is where statues, commemorations and memorials in Canberra should go. Do you think that if the government chose to memorialise Ms Salthouse, there would be an appropriate place in Canberra for such a memorial?

Mr Villiers: I do not think there would be any particular place, but it would have to be somewhere where it could be noticed, and people could realise that Sue was a person with a disability who did things for people with a disability—not just her name

on a place, as we have talked about before. The value in this would be ensuring that people with disability recognise that they are valued and make contributions, and are able to contribute equally in our community. Just naming something after her would not go far enough in doing that. I do not think that a particular place is really a consideration.

THE CHAIR: Have you thought about what you would like? Is it a statue? Is it a road?

Mr Villiers: I have thought about it a little bit. A statue would be good; a road would be good, or a suburb. But the point is for people with disabilities to be able to recognise that and see that they have a place in our community, not just the name of the person who did that work.

MS ORR: This whole inquiry came about because of a bunch of young women who wanted to see more women memorialised after we saw another man memorialised. I am interested to get your general views on having that visibility of women and what you would like to see happen. You have raised Sue Salthouse as a particular example, but do you have a broader contextual view on the bigger issue?

Mr Villiers: I think it is the same focus that I have highlighted. By having more women visible, not just their names but the reason why they made a contribution to the community, that would allow women, females and non-binary people, to see that they have a place in our community, that they can add value and they are a big part of our community that we respect and value. Sue would be a big part of that and would be a very good example. But any female or non-binary memorialisation would have that same effect.

MS ORR: Would you be supportive of seeing greater commemoration of women, beyond the one example that you have raised?

Mr Villiers: Yes, for sure.

THE CHAIR: I am interested in asking a little bit more about Sue. I see in your submission that in 1995 she was injured in an accident. As a result of that, was she in a wheelchair?

Mr Villiers: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I note that, tragically, she died in her wheelchair-accessible motorcycle. That was very bold. Did she always ride motorcycles? Why was the choice of a motorcycle made? I am interested in that aspect of her.

Mr Villiers: I do not know too much about her motorcycle, but I know she was someone who always pushed not to be tolerated but included. That was her mantra. She did not think people in the community who have disabilities should just be respected or tolerated; she thought they should be able to be included along with every other person.

THE CHAIR: I love that.

Mr Villiers: Riding a motorbike is a perfect example of how she demonstrated that. I have never ridden a motorbike. I do not think I would have the skill, probably; but, clearly, she did.

THE CHAIR: Of course. I ride motorcycles; they are fabulous. I love that part and wonder whether that could be something that we consider, as part of any memorialisation, if that is the way we go. Is there anything else that you would like to impress on the committee? I am keen to hear anything else that you want—

Mr Villiers: She was clearly a valued member of the community. Although she is no longer with us, she did a lot of work. It is important that we recognise that but that we do not stop there; we should keep pressing on and moving further ahead in disability inclusion. I think that is something she would want.

THE CHAIR: That goes to a large part of what we are doing here—Canberra's history, and understanding the important people that have made our history, for whatever reason. There is definitely a big space to make sure there is inclusion and that memories are held.

There being no further questions, thank you so much. We really appreciate your time. A copy of the transcript will be sent to you, so please check that and make sure that it is accurate. I do not think any questions were taken on notice. We thank you for your time today.

Mr Villiers: Thank you.

MAGNER, MS CHRISTINE, President, Zonta Club of Canberra Breakfast
GOULSTONE, MR JEREMY

THE CHAIR: The next witnesses appearing today are Ms Christine Magner, president of the Zonta Club of Canberra Breakfast, and Mr Jeremy Goulstone. On behalf of the committee, thank you for appearing today and for your written submission. I remind you of the protections and obligations afforded by parliamentary privilege. Please acknowledge that you have read the statement and that you understand its implications. Would you like to make a brief opening statement?

Ms Magner: I have read the privilege statement and I understand it. I will start by saying that Zonta Club of Canberra Breakfast acknowledge that we are on Ngunnawal land and pay our respects to their elders, past and present.

Stephanie joined our club in 2017. She was probably the most active and energetic person you have ever met. Sadly, she died on 13 January after a very aggressive, quick cancer. In that time she made such a change to our club because she actually promoted things like "Zonta says no", against domestic violence. She also did a large number of other things.

Our proposal talks about the Peace bell ringing and "Zonta says no". She pretty much did every project we had. She was the most active person. She was an avid social media user. We make breast cushions for women when they have had mastectomies. She would use Facebook to find materials and things that we needed to make them, and get them and source them as cheaply as possible, plus make them as well. As Jeremy would know, his kitchen table was often filled with that.

We still deliver home starter packs to women when they leave ACT refuges. Those home starter packs have microwaves, vacuum cleaners, cutlery, crockery et cetera. She used to pick them up and deliver them. She also came with me one day to talk to some of the senior caseworkers, to check that we were giving them what they needed. That is how we implemented providing vacuum cleaners, because most of the women have babies, and they were worried about the babies being on the floor. It is about little things like that.

We also make birthing kits. The birthing kits are given to overseas countries. They comprise a very small black plastic bag with a piece of black sheet on which a woman can have a baby, a couple of pieces of string, a weeny little scalpel, some gloves, and a tiny piece of soap. That saves over 80 per cent of women who have babies in developing countries. We send them to Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands; you would not think that they would need them. Just before we locked down again, we packed 4,000 and they went overseas. Such small things are amazing for women.

We started to try to get into the advocacy space. We had been doing a lot of service, but we were trying to get into advocacy. The way we did that was by starting to put in "Zonta says no" 16 days of activism against domestic violence. We have been doing that every year since 2017. To start with, we were only having displays in libraries. She heard Michael Rabey, from the Rotary Club of Canberra Burley Griffin, talking on the radio about the Peace bell and that it was not being used enough. She got in

touch with him. We had our first Peace bell ringing in 2018, with about nine people there. Our 2020 Peace bell ringing had about 64 people attending. This will be our fifth year, if we have it this year. We have had members from each side of the federal and ACT governments in attendance. Many of you have been there, too; I have seen you. We have been so blessed to have people come along. Last year was a little bit of a washout, with the rain.

The point is that it was also an opportunity that we took to remember Stephanie again, because without her we would not have taken that opportunity. We would not have seen it and grabbed that opportunity. That is one thing we have to say: she was energetic in her service work, dedicated to women, and dedicated to stopping domestic violence and raising that awareness. We are certainly taking a much bigger platform and continuing on from starting that in 2017.

THE CHAIR: How did she get involved with you? What brought her to you?

Ms Magner: She retired in 2017 and decided she wanted to join something in order to give back. At that stage she was doing part-time work, Zonta work, and service and advocacy, and she had two little grandchildren. Jeremy has said several times that when she found Zonta, she found her home. It was exactly where she needed to be.

THE CHAIR: What would you like to let us know, Jeremy?

Mr Goulstone: I just think that she blossomed.

THE CHAIR: Lovely.

Mr Goulstone: We came to Australia in 1984. We had our child, and we both had full-time jobs. She found it very difficult to make friends in that environment. Most of her friends were my friends from work. When she retired, she met one of the Zonta ladies at the gym, in fact, and saw an opportunity. We had been involved with fostering, earlier in our lives, and I think she saw this as a continuation of that work.

MS ORR: I am interested in hearing about a couple of things from you. Firstly, how do you feel that it would be best to commemorate Stephanie and people like Stephanie? Also, when we talk about memorialisation, we tend to take people who have made quite high-profile contributions to the community or to careers, and I am interested in hearing your views on how we commemorate our local heroes—these people who really get down and do things within our community. They might not necessarily appear quite so visibly in the newspaper, but what they do from day to day has such a huge impact, as we have already heard.

Mr Goulstone: I think Stephanie would have been embarrassed to be asked this question. I really have not thought about it. I do not think that a statue or anything like that would be appropriate. The only thing about street names is that people do not know where they come from. I believe there is a website where you can look up the derivation of particular street names in Canberra. Is that true?

MS ORR: Yes, it is. My understanding is that it is recorded on the internet and you can have a look. On that point, I was in Melbourne not too long ago and the council,

under the street name, had included who the person was and what they had done. It was right in front of you. So there are lots of different ways in which this is being approached.

Mr Goulstone: I have not really thought about the way that she might be memorialised, other than that consideration of street names. She also has a very long name. People who live in that street might not enjoy having to spell it every time!

Ms Magner: Another option could be, seeing that there is such a close link to the Peace bell, to look at whether there is somewhere in the garden, in the Nara Peace Park, where something could be put. Often a lot of women walk around there. When we have been doing other things there, women have come up to us quite often and said, "I'm suffering from domestic violence; who do I speak to?" It is often parks that people might go to because they feel safe. There could be something there that commemorated her—something small, because she would not like anything really big. She would be embarrassed. I think she would also be very happy that it means that her legacy lives on; people can ask the questions and we can give answers about that.

MS ORR: It brings me back to the other part of the question. With these local heroes, these people who get in and do things, what role do you think, more broadly, they should have in the memorialisation and recognition that we as a community give?

Ms Magner: I am not quite sure what you mean, what role should they have, because—

MS ORR: What prominence should they have? It goes to the point of the very high profile people, but we know there are a lot of other people who do great things within our community that are not quite as high profile. The question I am asking is: what do you think we should be doing to make sure that we get these local heroes to be more prominent within our memorialisation?

Ms Magner: It is about getting the information out in the news, in the *Canberra Weekly*, because that is where a lot of people pick up these things and understand who they are. It is more likely to drive them to go to whatever it might be, whether it is a road or a little memorial. Sometimes we do not necessarily promote what we do and what the Assembly does. That way provides a chance to really get that out.

Stephanie was an average ACT woman. There are so many of them out there. They are often totally overlooked, because the majority of the names are male. We wanted to put in this submission to show how somebody can make such a difference when she has the time. She has put in her energy. Honestly, she worked day and night for Zonta and for the empowerment and betterment of women and children. It is a story that is important to get out to everybody.

MR DAVIS: First of all, Mr Goulstone, I am sorry for your loss. Thank you so much for being here today; I have really appreciated it. I wonder whether I would have got to know Stephanie's story if you were not here today, so I appreciate it.

The question I want to ask leads on from Ms Orr's point about how to commemorate. You have been here all morning; you would have heard the evidence from Mr Villiers,

who spoke about Sue Salthouse and how the government has a grant program to honour Ms Salthouse. Have you given thought to the variety of ways like that, whereby someone who has contributed to the community, such as Stephanie, could be memorialised, as opposed to the more traditional things that we think of, like street naming and statues? Do you have any reflections on that?

Mr Goulstone: I do not really know what other ways could be used. It had not occurred to me that you would want to know about that.

Ms Magner: That could be a very good way. We have been very lucky at Zonta to have received grants from the Snow Foundation and John James to assist with delivering some of the things we do. Something like that could actually extend what could be done. I know Stephanie would be very proud to know that something has come out of her legacy—something supporting women leaving refuges, or something supporting women with breast cancer. The birthing kits are for overseas, so it is not really about the ACT. We certainly talk about them every year and let people know, because we want more people to help us to make them.

MR DAVIS: Now that I have heard the story, I have to ask, because I am curious: has the warehouse moved on to someone else's kitchen table, Mr Goulstone?

Mr Goulstone: I did have a bit of a clear-out.

Ms Magner: Some of it is still at my place.

THE CHAIR: I am interested in hearing a bit more about the many people that the organisation is helping, with regard to the women leaving refuges, from an ACT perspective.

Ms Magner: In the year before COVID, we delivered 66 kitchen packs to women leaving refuges in the ACT and region, because we cover Queanbeyan as well. With respect to one pack that I delivered, they had five children, so it was a mother with five children. Sometimes it is a mother, a grandmother and children. We actually put the kitchen pack together according to what the make-up of the family is.

Every year we make about 300 breast cushions. The other Canberra club makes about the same as well. They are delivered to Calvary hospital, John James hospital and Wagga hospital. The rate of women, and men now, having breast cancer is increasing.

THE CHAIR: Pardon my ignorance; what is a breast cushion for someone who has had a mastectomy?

Ms Magner: When somebody has had a mastectomy, and either lost one or both breasts, it is very painful to lay on. These breast cushions are like a little croissant, filled with stuffing. They sit there and have a little tie on the top to keep them there. My mother and mother-in-law both had breast cancer, so I am very well aware of these. It makes such a difference because they can lay more comfortably. We also provide a little card, to let them know that we made them and that we are thinking about them. That was one of the things that Stephanie added to it—that thought, to let people know that we are thinking about you and we do care for you. Some of them

have reached out and some of them have joined our club.

THE CHAIR: How wonderful. If people want to donate, how do they know to get in touch with you? Who would they contact?

Ms Magner: We have a website. A lot of people are on social media. We have Facebook and Instagram. Particularly when we have events, we put quite a lot out. I have spoken on ABC and one of the other radio stations. I have been on TV as well. We try to get out there and let people know.

One of the other things that I did not mention is our big fundraiser—Stephanie was heavily involved—which is our pre-loved fashion sale. We have donated clothes from women across Canberra that perhaps are no longer working. The money and the proceeds that we make from that all goes to fund the kitchen packs for the women leaving the refuges, or anything else that we need to do. That is our big fundraiser for the year. We certainly put a lot of information out and people donate huge amounts of clothes for us to sell.

THE CHAIR: How many members do you have?

Ms Magner: At the moment it is 27. It varies slightly. We are just renewing, and there are a couple that have not renewed.

MS ORR: You have raised Stephanie as one example. Do you have any views around the broader commemoration of women and the recognition of women within how we memorialise people in the ACT? Would you like to see more women? Would you like to see more diversity within that?

Ms Magner: I would definitely like to see more diversity. I think it is great to have women, but it is also great to have the whole radius of everybody in the ACT, and to be recognised for what you are and what you do. Certainly, we look up to people—to what they have achieved, to what energy and effort they have put in, and the outcomes. It is really great. I think you are doing a wonderful job and I am very thankful for it.

MR DAVIS: I will have to sound like a terrible local member and see how many times I can say the word "Tuggeranong". One of the things that has frustrated me slightly, as someone who has been born and raised in Canberra, is that a lot of our memorials, our commemorations of important people and events, are in our city centre. Do you have a view about the physical location of memorialisation in a way that hopefully exposes more Canberrans to more interesting and wonderful people? I am wondering whether you share some of my concerns and what your view is about physical location.

Ms Magner: I think that is really important. Yes, too often things are all in the city. The majority of us, these days, do not come in to the city anywhere near as often—you have to, but most of us do not come in.

THE CHAIR: But we would not, possibly.

Ms Magner: I think it is important. We have such big areas in Gungahlin,

Tuggeranong, Weston Creek and Woden. There are great areas. We can put memorials across Canberra, and most of our people have done things across Canberra. I think that is a great idea.

MR DAVIS: If the committee recommended to government, and the government subsequently took on, installing more public art and commemorations outside the city centre, would your club have an appetite or an interest, or do you know of other organisations who would be interested, in having events at or around those new art pieces, those new commemorations? Do you think it would increase traffic and events outside the CBD as well?

Ms Magner: It certainly would. I know that we would definitely have something regularly, every year, if not a couple of times a year, at a memorial that was for Stephanie. We would definitely go there and seek that out. I do believe it would bring more people to them. Art is something to go and see; then, all of a sudden, you see the little plaque and you start to realise and understand that person, and perhaps even look up that person. That also helps people to understand, and helps people to understand that people can be memorialised even for small things, or else for the fact that they have supported people within the Canberra region, or people that could not stand up for themselves. There are so many ways in which people can provide support. You do not have to be on a pedestal; you can just speak up.

THE CHAIR: Thank you both for coming along today. Again, Mr Goulstone, I am very sorry for your loss. She sounds amazing. As you say, she flourished.

Mr Goulstone: Blossomed.

THE CHAIR: I love that. I really appreciate your time and your submission. Again, thank you for being here. You will get a copy of the Hansard transcript; please read that. If you feel that there need to be any changes, let us know.

Ms Magner: Thank you very much.

TANNAHILL, MR GREG

THE CHAIR: Our next witness is Mr Greg Tannahill. Thanks for coming, and thank you for your submission. I want to remind you of the protections and obligations afforded by parliamentary privilege and draw your attention to the statement. Please acknowledge that before you speak. Would you like to start by making a statement?

Mr Tannahill: My pronouns are he/him, I am appearing in my capacity as a private citizen and I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. I am grateful to be appearing on Ngunnawal land and I acknowledge and respect elders past, present and emerging.

Good morning, Madam Chair, and hello again from the weekend. I must disclose that I saw Ms Castley briefly at the Palmerston polling booth on the weekend, where we were both volunteering, albeit for different teams.

THE CHAIR: It was a big day.

Mr Tannahill: Good morning to Ms Orr and to Mr Davis. Good morning also to my former colleagues in Hansard. I am here today to assist the committee in whichever way I can.

To give a brief summation of my position, which is pretty much as I put in my written submission, firstly, I agree with the 223 petitioners who sparked this inquiry and with the other 14 submissions that I have read—I hear there are now 16, so there is one that I have not read. I do not know whether I agree with it—hopefully, I do. I agree with the ones that were up as of last night, in that, if we are to publicly commemorate individuals, we should take active and systemic steps to recognise more women, more non-binary people, including members of our Indigenous community, and a more diverse range of professions, ethnicities and Canberrans with disabilities. I have no objection to any of the specific individuals that submitters have raised in those first 15 submissions—all very sensible.

My position that was a bit different, and for which I am here today, is simply to put the idea that the government perhaps should not be involved in the commemoration of individuals through memorialisation in street and place names. That position comes from a couple of places. The first is that, as far as I see, there is no strong public benefit from doing this. The people who are most deserving of memorialisation in our community did not go into it looking to have a street or a suburb named after them. In many cases, they may be embarrassed to think that might happen—although that should not be a reason. I think there are some underlying issues about why that might be the case, but that is not what they were looking for. They would, very often, be most pleased to see themselves commemorated through the continuation of their work and the elevation of the issues that they cared about in their lives.

Street and suburb names are a fairly poor vehicle for educating people about excellent members of our community. As I think both of the previous submitters have raised, when you see a street name, at least in the ACT, there is no information there about who that person is or why the street was named after them; you have to go online and

look for it. That could be addressed by putting an additional sign under the street sign, as some places have done. Fundamentally, it is a fairly poor vehicle for conveying that information.

To some extent it trivialises names. When you have a street named after someone, especially if there is not that education alongside it, the name becomes associated with a street and not the person. To some extent it drowns out Google searches for the actual person, because you get all of the things that have happened on the street. I do not think there is a great memorialisation purpose served by these namings.

My comments do not particularly apply to statues. I think there are some other considerations there. You can put a plaque on them; it does serve a public art purpose because it does show a bit more about why we are commemorating the person.

In terms of street and place names, my second point is that we keep getting it wrong. With the best will in the world, we keep naming streets and suburbs after people and, 25, 50 or 100 years down the track, we look back and think, "I don't think we should have named that place after that person. We're not so certain about whether we like this person anymore."

We have seen it with William Slim Drive recently. I believe Bec Cody did some work on that in the last Assembly. We see it a lot through our history, where either our values change or we learn a lot more about the person that we have named it after. It might be very specific, where we name a place after an individual and that person might turn out to be an abuser of some kind who has victims still living and who have not come forward. Those people would have to see a street or a suburb named after their abuser, and perhaps have to work on it, travel on it, or maybe live in the suburb. At a more systemic level, certainly, many of the people who were involved in architecture of the policies that led to the Stolen Generations are still commemorated through street names and place names around Australia. I suspect that the people who are affected by those policies have some fairly strong feelings about that.

No-one set out to get it wrong at the time we were making these calls, but they did. I do not think we are greatly wiser today. I think we will keep making those mistakes. I think that there is hurt caused by those mistakes. As I say, I do not see that, in this case, it is set off against a strong public benefit. My advice is: maybe just do not. There are other ways we can name streets. There are other ways we can name suburbs, after place names and traditional Indigenous owners, after local flora and fauna, after a range of other concepts—pure fiction, if we need to. But there are other ways we can name these streets.

In terms of the individuals in our community that we want to hold up to the community and say, "This is what we think is excellence; this is what we think is a role model," we have a range of ways of doing that already. In a person's life, there are a range of awards that we bestow upon people and other ways of lifting them up. We do have other ways of commemorating people after death, but there is no reason that we could not have further awards programs. If we as a society have decided this person is worthy of commemoration, we can have an awards ceremony. We can bestow on them a posthumous award and we can have a celebration around that, where there can be some speeches and some news articles. There are other ways we

can do this, and I would suggest that that is what we should pursue in relation to this.

I will make two more points on this. It is certainly not always the case, and certainly not in the case of, for instance, disability advocates, but very often the people we have commemorated in the past are people who could have paid for their own commemoration. I would like to give the example of the Jim Murphy Bridge. Without reflecting on Jim Murphy and his contributions to Canberra, that was a call made by, I believe, Katy Gallagher in 2011. If Mr Murphy's estate had wanted a piece of Canberra named after him, they could have afforded that. I do not know that the government necessarily needed to be involved in that process.

That comes up a lot, particularly when we are looking at commemorating businesspeople, politicians, lawyers—a range of people who often end up with significant assets after their death that can choose to express that memorialisation personally and privately.

Lastly, the inevitable fact is that, no matter what we do with the ACT place names committee and the criteria by which they name places, it will reflect the biases of those who are in power—in a best-case scenario, now, today, if we change them today, but, more likely, those who were in power sometime in the past. These things codify and they calcify.

Of the many people who deserve commemoration in Canberra, some are more disproportionately likely to meet and interact with members of the Assembly and are likely to have name recognition when their name is mentioned to members of the Assembly or the ACT place names committee. Those people may well be excellent people who deserve commemoration, but there will also be others—and I think the Zonta Club presentation was excellent in this regard—where the way in which they have brought their excellence to the community is not going to make them as familiar to the people who are making the decisions.

That bias is very hard to correct. We have to acknowledge that, disproportionately, we are going to recognise a certain subset of people above others, no matter how much we strive to increase diversity, although that does not mean we should not strive.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I really appreciate your submission. I believe that yours was the only one to suggest that we should not do this. It is really interesting to hear your perspective on that. Of course, I acknowledge that you do not know everything about somebody. Unfortunately, with history, we memorialise somebody and then we find out a little bit about them. There are all sorts of people that have come up in my lifetime that I have looked up to. I appreciate that perspective, and it is one that I had not thought of. While we are talking about women, as you say, Zonta and all of our submissions have pinpointed people that are not the big name, flashy types. It is an interesting mix of recommendations and submissions that we have had. I note your submission says that, disproportionately, we have commemorated rich, white men—

Mr Tannahill: We have.

THE CHAIR: and straight men. That is why our lens here is non-binary and women; and, as you mentioned, members of the CALD community. These are comments

rather than questions. Do you have a question, Ms Orr?

MS ORR: Yes, I have a few questions for Mr Tannahill. You raised a really good point as to how, when more information about a person, or things we did not know about them, comes to light, it make us reconsider why we have memorialised them. You raised as an example what would be an extension of Gundaroo Drive, and the circumstances of how that came about being changed. It came into the Assembly and was taken forward by a local member.

I would be interested in your views on what you think would be appropriate ways to raise these concerns. When more information comes to light and something is put in doubt, there might be a case for not having something that has been named after a person continue to be named after them. Do you think there needs to be a mechanism to enable that?

Mr Tannahill: It is inherently very tricky. Where it is a historical issue or where we discover that someone in colonial times was involved in crimes against the Indigenous population, given the time scales involved, there are fairly good mechanisms in place for academics to say, "We have discovered some new things; we are raising an issue for lobby groups to come together."

When it is a matter of individual abuse, where victims of actual individual abuse may still be living and still be in the community, there are all of the issues around reporting abuse. It is unlikely that many of those people will think of the place names committee as the first place that they would raise that. Certainly, how to raise rates of abuse reporting is a much vexed issue in the first place. I do not think we can deal with that issue at the place names level without dealing with the larger systemic issue first.

It would be very difficult to come forward and say, "You've named a whole suburb after this person but actually"—

MS ORR: That is a good point. Maybe I will rephrase the question: where we have a substantiated claim against someone, and someone is willing to talk up, should there be some recourse for reconsideration? The case of the Gundaroo Drive extension is one. We also know there has been quite a bit around Haig Park, and a lot of questions around the approach to colonial warfare that he took, and whether we should be celebrating his achievements. If I recall correctly, because Haig Park was included in that motion, we would not necessarily no longer name the place after him but we would put a lot more information on plaques and information boards in the area, so that people can see the full picture. Rather than going to those two specific examples, do you think there should be recourse for reconsideration?

Mr Tannahill: Absolutely, there should. It is hard to think of a systemic measure because these are people who have already died, so there is unlikely to be a court case against them and you are not going to get a criminal conviction and a review of it. I think there could be a better understanding in the community about what the options are around this. There are good examples already of people lobbying the Assembly or raising an issue in the media. Focus groups who have an interest in history may know how to do that. I think the average person on the street thinks, "I have an issue; where

do I even start? Who do I take that to?" I would say, "Raise it with your local member, raise it with the media, get a group together, and campaign." I know what I am doing in that regard, but the average person does not.

There needs to be a front door for that kind of inquiry, or the place names committee need to be more media active. I am not aware of whether they have a social media presence. There should be one of those lovely, big ACT government graphics, "Do you have an opinion? Our door is always open, here is the email address." That could be useful.

MS ORR: You focused quite a bit on street names, saying that you do not think they are a good way, necessarily, of acknowledging the contribution or recognising, on an ongoing basis, the contribution of the people who they are named after. You made, in your statement, a differentiation between street names and statues, because statues could have information with them. I am interested to know: is it the case that you just do not like suburbs and streets named after people or is it the case that you think that, if we are memorialising, we should have a way to also recognise a little bit of information about that person?

Mr Tannahill: My focus on street names and suburb names was simply that in recognising someone there is always a trade-off between "We do not know everything about someone" and "We are just never going to mention anyone for fear of getting it wrong." There is a trade-off between the public benefit of doing so and of lauding what is good in our society, versus the risk.

Say you appointed a judge; you have to appoint a judge. You might get it wrong, but you have to have some judges. Or say you give out Order of Australia medals. We are going to give our best shot at that, but there is some public benefit in terms of who we, at least, and the government of the day think is exemplary and worthy of medals.

With suburb names I just do not see that public benefit because they are not educative. People do not learn from them. They just go, "That is the name." That is the end of the story. I am drawing a distinction on statues. I do not have a fully formed opinion on statues, but statues certainly have some other options in terms of a public art purpose. They can be inherently attractive and have an events and arts agenda. Regardless of who is in them, you can put a plaque on them. The form of the statue can say something about what we consider to be exemplary about this person or why we are remembering them. They can be re-plaqued and they can be moved. There are a lot more options in terms of statues.

MS ORR: So if the street names had an opportunity to include information; if they had a little bit—

Mr Tannahill: That would be better.

MS ORR: Yes, just a bit of information. Some people have also suggested QR codes, where you can scan it and learn about them, because everyone knows what QR codes are now.

Mr Tannahill: I like the actual words being there a bit better. I am the kind of nerd

who would walk down a street and I would see a name, and I would go, "Who was that?" And I would have a look at it. Maybe that is some people; that is not every person. But it at least advances that educative point of saying, "We memorialise this person for a reason. We want people to know that. Here is how they know."

MR DAVIS: Thank you, Mr Tannahill. Given that the committee's remit is to specifically look at greater inclusion of diverse people—women, people who are non-binary—I wonder if you identify that there would be a greater risk, the same risk, or a lesser risk of the instances you outline, where we later learn of someone that they were problematic in some way. If the government moved to commemorating more women and non-binary people—

I suppose I should have started with a comment. Let us be spicy and hit the nail on the head. Everyone that we have identified who we have named a place after and who is problematic is a cisgendered man. If we stopped naming things after cisgendered men and started to name more things after women and non-binary people, do you think there would be less of a risk of the need to rename? It is a spicy point.

Mr Tannahill: The demographics—

MR DAVIS: I know, it is a spicy question.

Mr Tannahill: Yes. The demographics of abuse are well documented by experts better on this topic than me, and I do not want to dive into that space. I think it is enough to say that recognising more women and non-binary people is entirely something we should pursue on its own merits and that we do not need to go further down than to say that that should be happening regardless. I think there are some interesting points in what you say, but I am not the person to answer them. That would be better directed to advocates or experts in that field.

MR DAVIS: While I am on the string of spicy questions, I have one I want to ask you. In your opening statement you raised the situation of—was it William Hovell Drive? Or William Slim—

THE CHAIR: William Slim.

Mr Tannahill: I mentioned William Slim, which has been renamed.

MR DAVIS: William Slim; I was confused. William Slim Drive. As someone who is born and raised in Canberra, I have always known William Slim Drive as William Slim Drive. And not until a community conversation was initiated about the history of that person would I have known any better that that person had a problematic history. It forced someone like me to confront that history. Do you think that, in some weird way, there is a perverse benefit to those sorts of conversations being initiated when we come to learn more about people that we have commemorated, into the future—that it forces a process of truth-telling and exploration about our history that most people might not otherwise be exposed to?

Mr Tannahill: I think it is good to have those conversations. I do not think that is the ideal mechanism to trigger them. I think the hurt that is done to victims who might not

be prepared to speak up in the time before that conversation starts, and then possibly the further hurt when that conversation becomes a public debate—with, perhaps, people deciding to take the opposite viewpoint—outweighs any benefit that might come in that regard. I think those conversations are important; it is just that they need to start in other ways and, ideally, at earlier times. At the time of first memorialisation is one, but then you might not have the information in front of you to fully have that discussion.

MR DAVIS: I feel it is important to note that I agree, but I am glad to have asked you the question and heard the answer, so thank you.

THE CHAIR: Yes, thank you. I would like to just make a comment that if we now go forward with only commemorating women and non-binary, it does not mean that they, themselves, are not abusers—just to be clear on that. I do not believe it is just cismen that—

MR DAVIS: I should stress that that was not my suggestion, but, rather, would the risk be lesser, statistically speaking.

THE CHAIR: Right. Good question.

Mr Tannahill: Yes, there are certainly abusers who are women and non-binary people, as you said. The demographics of abuse are what they are. I think I said in my statement that I do not expect that anyone is going to go forward with a program of only recognising women and non-binary people, but we do have a weighted history of going in one direction, and correcting that on the scale of Canberra may require actively weighting in the other direction for some period to redress that balance. But that is ultimately a matter for the committee inquiry on place names.

THE CHAIR: So the pendulum swing: do we actually have to go completely to the opposite end to—

Mr Tannahill: We are going to continue having excellent men in Canberra; I am sure of it.

THE CHAIR: Of course we will. That is correct.

MR DAVIS: Of course. My job here is to ask the spicy questions, Chair.

THE CHAIR: Yes, it is. Good.

MS ORR: Mr Tannahill, we touched on this a bit and you have mentioned it in your statement too: remembering the local community heroes and the ones who get out and do a lot of service but do not necessarily have a high profile. Do you have any views on how prominent they should be in our memorialisation and how we can best put forward these people for consideration?

Mr Tannahill: We do have a number of ways of trying to identify that kind of person while they are alive. We have a number of awards in the ACT. I could not tell you their names but I see "Do you have someone you want to nominate?" turning up on

various political feeds in the ACT quite regularly. I do not know whether we have a lot of those for people who have passed away: "Do you want to memorialise someone who has passed away in the last year, the last two years? Do you want to nominate someone?"

I think that could be an excellent way—a yearly ceremony of acknowledging excellent Canberrans we have lost in the past year, with nominations, or in the last 10 years or something like that. To identify these people really requires getting the message out to average Canberrans and letting them know that this is not just a process for people whose names are in the newspaper every day, that it is for you, genuinely. You nominate the person that you think is great, even if you do not know if anyone else thinks that they are great, the person that made a difference to your life. Even if it was only your life, it was a lot.

It is really about breaching that boundary. I forward these to people I know and they inevitably go, "I don't think that is for me. I don't think that is for anyone I know." I am like, "It really is. You know, it doesn't hurt to put the name forward. Give it a go." Breaching that "this process is not for me" barrier is really quite hard to get through to people. But that would be the way, I suggest.

THE CHAIR: Great; thank you.

MR DAVIS: Thank you.

Mr Tannahill: Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for coming today and for your submission. It is great to get all sides of this when we are doing an inquiry. As you will have heard, the proof transcript will be forwarded to you, so please check that and let us know if there are any errors. That is it. I do not think there are further questions, so thank you so much for your time today, Mr Tannahill.

Mr Tannahill: Fantastic. Thank you for your time.

THE CHAIR: Thanks. With that, we are going to break for morning tea and we will be back at 11.20.

Hearing suspended from 11.00 to 11.22 am.

FAULKNER, MS SAMANTHA

THE CHAIR: Welcome back to the public hearing of the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality in its inquiry into memorialisation through public commemoration. Witnesses, please be aware that proceedings are being recorded and live streamed. Ms Samantha Faulkner, welcome. Thank you for your submission and for coming in today. I remind you of the protections and obligations with regard to parliamentary privilege and draw your attention to the statement. Can you please acknowledge that before you speak today. Would you like to start with an opening statement?

Ms Faulkner: Yes, certainly.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Ms Faulkner: I confirm that I did receive that statement and signed it and read it and sent it back and so on.

THE CHAIR: Perfect. That is it. Great.

Ms Faulkner: Good morning, everyone. Let me first begin by acknowledging the traditional custodians and country:

> Dhawura nguna, dhawura Ngoonawal.

This is Ngunnawal Country.

> Yanggu Ngalamanyin Dhunimanyin.

Today we are all meeting together on Ngunnawal Country.

> Ngoonawalwari Dhawurawari Dindi Wanggiralidjinyin.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the Elders.

And let me extend that to all of us in the room today. I acknowledge your elders and your ancestors for caring for country, wherever they may be in Australia, and for looking after you and bringing you here today, to where we are.

Good morning. I just want to make a few opening comments, followed up by a few points. Thank you. I am here as an independent citizen in an individual capacity. It is good to see the inquiry happening. I saw it, I think, in the *Canberra Times*, probably last year, and I was relieved to see the extension. That allowed me the time and capacity to do a little bit of research and put together a short submission. However, I acknowledge that it probably was number 15 of the submissions.

For me, it was disappointing to see the number of submissions received when I know that this is certainly a topic of great interest in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and for women and the Canberra community as well. However,

community consultation may elicit further views and names to celebrate, so there is certainly that opportunity. Perhaps it is the beginning of something.

The following point that I would like to make is that there is a lack of diversity reflected in the places, monuments, streets and suburbs in the ACT. I have been a member of the ACT place names committee. During that time I tried to play a part in promotion of that information as well.

It is difficult for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders to see ourselves reflected in the Canberra community. A lot of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are not traditional custodians here in Canberra; we come from outside. There is a large Queensland population that come to Canberra to work and live. Sometimes they stay, but sometimes they go back home. A large part of people's working careers is spent here in Canberra. People study here, go to school and raise families. We have seen a number of generations grow up here, so we are starting to see a public service generation come through—almost three generations—so people do stay here as well and make it their home.

There are many notable women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who should be recognised for their achievements and contributions. In the submission I mentioned the ACT NAIDOC Awards. They are held in the second week of July. The National NAIDOC Awards, too, celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples nationally. Also, AIATSIS, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, are a good source of information and have those resources and provide names. I believe AIATSIS did provide a late submission, so I just encourage that connection there too.

In closing my short statement, I would just like to read a poem that I wrote, and that was published in the *Canberra Times* in 2020, called *Heroes*:

> Eddie Mabo, Sol Bellear
> Elanor Harding, Elly Gaffney
> Elia Ware, David Unaipon
> Oodgeroo Noonuccal, Lena Passi
>
> George Mye, Kevin Gilbert
> Gatjil Djerkura, Dr G
> Steve Mam, Belza Lowah
> Audrey Kinnear, Yami Lester
> Barangaroo, Tjandamara, Pemulwuy
>
> All warriors, leaders
> In their own right
> Fighting for justice
> Independence, rights, freedom
>
> Fighting for mob, our people
> Equity and fairness
> So why don't we know them?
> Why don't we hear their names?

Sung loudly everyday
Why don't we know?
These are our heroes, mob, family.

I am happy to table that too.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Wonderful. I appreciate your submission. You certainly have a lot of skin in the game, being part of the naming group. Looking at the list of people that you have provided, the suggestions that you have given us, could you give us a bit of information? It is a long list, so I do not know that we have time to go through all of them. Who are a couple of the stand-outs for you? Just having a quick google, it is hard to work out who is who and what you are aiming for, so could you talk to me about your top three or four?

Ms Faulkner: Okay. How about groupings?

THE CHAIR: Groupings? Go groupings; yes.

Ms Faulkner: For me, Aunty Kerry Reed-Gilbert, as a poet, activist, advocate and writer, is a stand-out. Aunty Kerry was the founder of Us Mob writing group, of which I am a member and current treasurer. Aunty Kerry mentored a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers here in Canberra. I think a statue at Poet's Corner would be sensational. Her mentoring of not only local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers but non-Indigenous writers, I might add, also extends nationally. She was the founding chairperson of the First Nations Australia Writers Network, which is a national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers network supporting Indigenous literature and promoting that nationally and internationally. She is very warm and generous. She has nurtured quite a lot of writers, including me, and I think that without her Indigenous literature would not have the voice in the country that it has today. We can claim her as a Canberran, so let's get her up there.

THE CHAIR: Fantastic. Absolutely.

Ms Faulkner: The other two ladies, Aunty Thelma Weston and Aunty Lydia George, are our Torres Strait Islander female elders here in Canberra. Aunty Lydia George has been and I think still is on a number of ACT committees. She has family commitments that take her back to the Torres Strait, and to Sydney as well. So she is there when we need her, but she also has commitments that extend beyond Canberra.

Aunty Thelma Weston has won the ACT NAIDOC award for Elder of the Year and was a national NAIDOC recipient as well, I think two or three years ago, so fairly recently. Again, like Aunty Lydia, she is always there. Both are treasures here in Canberra, happy to speak to promote Torres Strait culture and to bring our young people together.

The next three ladies are Dawn Casey, Pat Turner and Pat Anderson—as Aboriginal women leaders of NACCHO, but also Dawn for her work with the building of the National Museum of Australia. In the nineties or 2000s there was a lot of coverage on that, but I think since that has gone it is like we have forgotten her. Let's not forget our women who are still with us, still doing great things. Pat Turner heads up

NACCHO. She was previously with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission as well. That is how I knew her, back in the nineties. They are fearless female leaders who are going to do amazing things over the next three years as well.

Pat Anderson, who has just recently retired from chairing the Lowitja Institute, lives in Canberra but also has a lot of commitments that take her back to the NT. She is a very humble leader. That guiding and mentoring generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women, I think, is something that they go about doing that they are not seeking recognition for. But they do make a difference; they do make a difference in people's lives who go on to fulfil and achieve great things.

The last five names there, obviously, are Ngunnawal senior elders, traditional custodians. They have a distinct place in the Canberra environment, to recognise their achievements, their role. They do not complain about being invited to do welcomes to country, to attend events. They are, some of them, quite senior, as in elderly. They do the normal things like go out and do the shopping and fix the car up and do school runs, but they also have that community representation. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples that is sometimes a burden because you are fulfilling more than two or three roles, not only as a quiet individual going about your daily life but: "Okay; I have got this community commitment coming up. I have got to make time for that, then I have got to coordinate and prepare and plan and bring people together too." It does take some time and capacity, and you have to be healthy to achieve all these things. Hopefully, that was very brief.

THE CHAIR: Of course. That is helpful. Thank you.

MS ORR: I know that the legislation for place names has been amended in more recent times to address the disparity between men and women and has some thresholds there for recognising the number of women, which is good, going forward. Do you have any views on how we start to correct the historical imbalance, because we still have quite a significant number of men commemorated, compared to women?

Ms Faulkner: It is great to see some of the changes in place, but it is also about communicating that to the community. I think it comes back to the ACT government making it known publicly that they are seeking more names, particularly of women. National Reconciliation Week or NAIDOC Week might be great opportunities to reach out to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and say, "Hey, if you have got some great women to nominate, to recognise, let us know," in an easy way, through community consultation or an email or something like that.

Maybe get the Elected Body involved too, to reach out to the community with the current structures in place so that you get that information. Go back to look at past ACT NAIDOC recipients, and at the ACT Office for Women, and the International Women's Day awards too. I think the information is there, so that can readily be used. For something a bit more current, there might be some more innovative or creative ways to do that. Use schools and schoolchildren, as an example, to do research. That is probably all I can offer at this stage.

MS ORR: Great. Thanks.

MR DAVIS: Ms Faulkner, I am interested in picking up on your experience as a member of the place names committee. In your submission you note that there would ideally be greater community awareness about the committee and the process for nominating. Do you have any advice for the government, through the committee, on how it could better promote the place names committee and help more people in the community to understand its role?

Ms Faulkner: Yes. The time I spent on there was great, and it was good to be there with Dr Kaye Price as well. I think she left at the same time as I did, but having two members on the committee was useful, to support one another. It was a good committee and it is still going great, and the secretary is super too. I just want to state that.

While the website is there and it is great to use, with the information on whether a particular name has been used, I do not think there is that awareness for the community to nominate people. Maybe do that through the Elected Body, through something innovative and creative, to show that it is a promotional exercise. Also, it has got to be tied to something that is already there; otherwise it is going to take some time to build up and get those numbers on board.

People are just busy, too, so it is kind of like you have to keep your eye on someone and say, "I think you will be great on that committee. Will you give it a year or two years?" If people are not going to have a good experience, they are not going to stay for the whole time either. Get case studies of other members who have been on there, what they have succeeded in doing. Promote the successes of the committee in terms of street names, parks, statues and that type of thing.

The committee has done good work, but I think, like a lot of people in Canberra, you just go about it; you do not really promote what you have done and what you do. So it is about seeing the successes, using the Elected Body—and artsACT, even—and tying it to National Reconciliation Week or NAIDOC Week, something that already exists. I think it is also about getting the secretariat and the members out, to see that there is that diversity out there, at Reconciliation Day on Monday, at maybe NAIDOC Week events, too, and just talking to people.

It works both ways, so you have got to be active in reaching out, but also the committee has got to be looking inwards to see what opportunities are there. I note that the committee is unpaid, whereas some of the other committees are paid, so that might make a difference.

THE CHAIR: Yes. Excellent.

MR DAVIS: I appreciate you are not here to speak on behalf of the committee, but I would probably appreciate just a little bit more of an understanding about how it works. Does the committee deliberate on names and individuals proposed to it by government or can the government and people in the community nominate locations, parks, spaces et cetera and say there are—I want to say "naming rights", but that is not right. You know what I am looking for?

Ms Faulkner: Sure. This location and—

MR DAVIS: That is right. "This could be an opportunity to talk about somebody important." What is the order in how it works?

Ms Faulkner: Yes. You can do it on the website, nominate a person. I think you can propose potentially where, if that person has an affinity with a specific park or area—say Ellis Rowan at the Botanic Gardens, obviously, as a botanist/painter. That makes sense, in that there could be, at the Botanic Gardens, maybe a lane or a statue or something like that.

The secretariat receives the submission and puts it to the committee and the committee deliberates. I guess it is about timing as well. If there is a street that needs a name: "Quick; let's have a look at what names have come in," or "Okay; this name has come in. There is nothing available at this stage. We will wait until something comes up and then we will match them up." I think there is a bit of that, but ask the minister or the secretary.

THE CHAIR: Okay. It is like a register. Sure.

Ms Faulkner: Minister Mick Gentleman.

THE CHAIR: Well, we have the minister this afternoon.

MR DAVIS: I certainly will. But you have helped me for when I speak to the minister this afternoon, so thank you.

THE CHAIR: Fantastic. I cannot believe how quickly that 20 minutes has gone.

Ms Faulkner: Sorry, yes.

MR DAVIS: Sorry.

THE CHAIR: No, I appreciate it. I have got so many more questions. I can spend some time looking them up myself. Thank you so much for your submission to the committee, and for your time today. We really appreciate it. There will be a transcript of the Hansard today. We will send that out to you. If there are any errors or concerns that you have, please get in touch with us.

Ms Faulkner: Sure.

THE CHAIR: I do not think there are questions on notice. No?

Ms Faulkner: Can I add one final comment?

THE CHAIR: Please.

Ms Faulkner: Please go on the She Shapes History tour. I did that with a friend, Rita Metzenrath from AIATSIS, on 8 May, Mother's Day.

THE CHAIR: She Shapes History?

Ms Faulkner: It is three-kilometre walking tour of the parliamentary triangle. It certainly identified a lack of women for me, other than the women's time line in the rose garden.

THE CHAIR: Wonderful.

Ms Faulkner: If you three and others could go on that, I think that would be a lovely field trip for the committee.

THE CHAIR: I would love to. Absolutely. We will look into that. Thank you. We could almost have an excursion.

Ms Faulkner: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Fantastic. Thank you.

MR DAVIS: Thank you so much.

THE CHAIR: We will close it there. We appreciate your time.

Ms Faulkner: Thank you.

MORTIMER, MR SHANE

THE CHAIR: We move to our next witness, Mr Shane Mortimer. On behalf of the committee, thank you so much for your submission and for coming in today. Protections and obligations: you will have seen the parliamentary privilege statement, I hope.

Mr Mortimer: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Before you speak, please state the capacity in which you are here today and that you acknowledge the privilege statement. Over to you for a statement.

Mr Mortimer: Thank you. I am Ngambri. My Ngambri name is Mingku, which means "grass tree". My very first Anglo-Ngambri ancestor born in Canberra was Ju Nin Mingku, which means "born by the grass tree"—James Ainslie's daughter.

THE CHAIR: Right.

Mr Mortimer: My Anglo name is Shane Mortimer. I was born on 24/12/1955.

THE CHAIR: Fantastic. And you have got the privilege statement?

Mr Mortimer: I do have the privilege statement. I have read that and I understand. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR: Fantastic. Would you like to table the documents that you have?

Mr Mortimer: Yes, I would like to table some documents for you today—and if I could just take a minute to go through those documents?

THE CHAIR: Please. Over to you. Thank you.

Mr Mortimer: Thank you very much. There is one each.

THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. Do you want us to have a look at those now, while you chat? Thank you so much, Mr Mortimer.

Mr Mortimer: You are welcome.

THE CHAIR: All right.

Mr Mortimer: Okay. On the first page of the document is my family, taken in 1896 at Lanyon, a photograph taken by the owners of Cuppacumbalong, where they used my great-great-great-grandfather's skull as a sugar bowl. In the middle of that photograph, in the very middle, is a short girl among the two tall girls. That is my great-grandmother.

THE CHAIR: With the dress? Yes, okay.

Mr Mortimer: Her father, Dick Lowe, is on the right-hand side of the photo. Her mother, sitting down with a baby in her arms, is Sarah Duncan McCartney, otherwise known as Sarah Lowe, married to Dick Lowe, on the right-hand side of the photo with the hat on, not with the crescent. Dick Lowe is a Walgalu man from the mountains, born in Kiandra. He used to do some work around here and ended up marrying Sarah Duncan McCartney. On the next page you should have a handwritten letter by Joshua John Moore, naming his property Canberry, after the local people.

THE CHAIR: Joshua John?

Mr Mortimer: Joshua John Moore, the first land grant recipient in Canberra, who received his land grant in the 1820s. This letter is handwritten by him here at his property at Acton Peninsula, where the National Museum of Australia and AIATSIS are today. That used to be Canberra Hospital. There you see in the second paragraph, second line, that he is at Canberry.

THE CHAIR: Why Canberry? How did that change?

Mr Mortimer: Simply because they could not get their Anglo tongue around the N-G sound, "Ngambri".

THE CHAIR: Okay.

Mr Mortimer: Ngambri. It is the tongue in the roof of the mouth. And so it was Anglicised, as the Anglos did. It is like Mumbai became Bombay and Beijing became Peking. Well, Ngambri became Canberry, became Canberra.

THE CHAIR: Ngambri.

Mr Mortimer: There are some references there for you as well, a couple of pages. I think there are three pages of references to the naming of Canberra. They are academic references and I think you will find them very useful.

THE CHAIR: Right.

Mr Mortimer: One of the main things, of course, that has been pointed out is that historians have accepted that Canberra is of Aboriginal origin for two reasons. First, the normal practice was to name unsurveyed land, in the first instance, after the local Aboriginal people.

THE CHAIR: Right. Okay. Thank you.

Mr Mortimer: Then you will see next is a painting of my great-great-great-grandfather, a man named Yungkung. We know him as Yungkung, which means "singing man". Sometimes he is referred to as Onyong, sometimes Allianoyonyiga or Hong Gong. You will see on the next page his king plate, given to him by Robert Campbell at Duntroon on 17 January 1831. It says, "Hong Gong's king plate. Hong Gong, chief of the Namadg tribe"—or Namadgi tribe; Namadgi is our language—"Presented by Mr Campbell, 17 January."

On the back of that you will see photographs of some women. These are seven of the nine generations in a direct mitochondrial line, a direct female line, descended from the union with James Ainslie and Ngadya, or as we call her, Mother Ngambri, because she was only ever known as "Ainslie's lubra", which is really disparaging.

But she brought Ainslie here and they arrived at where Corroboree Park is today, in Ainslie. That was the only clump of trees on the Limestone Plains and it was the only shade. It was a known corroboree ground. And so when she was given to him by the neighbouring Wallabolloa people, she was threatened with death if she did not bring him across to her country, away from them in Yass, or Yarrh, as we know it.

But having been given to him, she thought he was the spirit of a dead blackfella, because he was white. He had all these funny white things, fluffy things, with him, that they called "mudda" in the Wallabolloa language or the Gundungurra language, and of course "mudda" means "cloud", because they were clouds on legs. Incidentally, "cloud" in my language is a word familiar to you: "jumbuck".

THE CHAIR: Jumbuck.

Mr Mortimer: Very different, the two languages.

THE CHAIR: Very different. Okay.

Mr Mortimer: Then we have one of the problems in the area: a licence to shoot Aboriginals. You can see there that this one was transferred to the Australian legal system on 1 January 1901.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Mortimer: Okay. Then we get to the good bit.

THE CHAIR: Right. That is the history.

Mr Mortimer: I will not bore you with going through the detail on all of this, because it is very detailed.

THE CHAIR: It is good to read.

Mr Mortimer: But there is a lot of confusion and a lot of very deliberate and political manipulation going on with regard to Canberra and the ACT government's acknowledgement of Ngunnawal. It is undeniably a fraud. It is a very deliberate fraud.

THE CHAIR: All right.

Mr Mortimer: All right? And I put that on notice.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We will get to read this one. Yes. We will take time.

Mr Mortimer: Absolutely.

THE CHAIR: Wonderful. Thank you, Mr Mortimer.

Mr Mortimer: And it is a fraud fostered by former Chief Minister Jon Stanhope.

THE CHAIR: All right. Thank you. We will give attention to reading that. It is noted; thanks.

Mr Mortimer: Thank you. There is a lot there. Mr Stanhope made a point of really pushing this. That site that we are talking about, which is the reserve at Ainslie, should be called Ngadya Reserve. We have a language list that I printed off for you. I think you all have a copy of that page of the language list, and you will see that in the Yass language, the Limestone Plains language, Molonglo, Queanbeyan, in all those languages, the same word is used for "mother": Ngadya.

THE CHAIR: Ngadya, okay.

Mr Mortimer: That is correct; meaning "mother".

THE CHAIR: Mother; all right.

Mr Mortimer: And that is a high country word. You would probably find if you went up to Armidale and you spoke up there with the Gamilaraay people, they would use the same word.

THE CHAIR: I am just mindful of time, and we would like to hear more about your submission—

Mr Mortimer: Thank you. Of course.

THE CHAIR: about the Limestone Plains. Tell us more about that.

Mr Mortimer: Yes. The thing that disturbed me most is that, as you are aware, the federal government approved the destruction of the Ainslie volcanic site, and the bulldozers went in and destroyed 50,000-year-old petroglyphs on Christmas weekend.

THE CHAIR: Right.

Mr Mortimer: I found two lots of surveyors on the reserve site, and I questioned both lots of surveyors to find that they were surveying for Doma Group, for townhouses. That is a designated community access facility.

THE CHAIR: All right. We will look into that.

Mr Mortimer: All right. You will see in Dr Maxine Cooper's paper a report on ACT lowland native grassland investigation.

THE CHAIR: Is that in your submission?

Mr Mortimer: It is in the submission.

THE CHAIR: Yes, great. So not the one that you have just tabled?

Mr Mortimer: It is in this group of papers that I have given you.

THE CHAIR: That you have just given us.

Mr Mortimer: Yes. That is correct.

THE CHAIR: Right. Okay.

Mr Mortimer: Back in 2007 I was consulted by Dr Cooper, and section 8 of her report is my input to that investigation.

THE CHAIR: Section 8, right.

Mr Mortimer: That is correct. And you have a copy of it there.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr Mortimer: There are a couple of maps for you: one done by Norman Tindale in 1974, featuring just straight lines drawn on a map and the word "Ngunnawal" in the middle of it. The only other reference really to "Ngunnawal" was in 1844 by the then Protector of Aborigines, who led the massacre across Tasmania, George Augustus Robinson.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

Mr Mortimer: There is the ANU map of "Kamberri", as they call it—yet another version of "Ngambri". That is a lot more accurate, in so much as our boundaries were rivers and natural features that defined who and where we are.

THE CHAIR: Great.

Mr Mortimer: And here is some more of the Stanhope information. There is a letter to me on 30 September 2008 thanking me for my input to their genealogy study. I found that very interesting, because he then went on to say to a whole pile of people that they were naming the first people of Canberra "Ngunnawal" because there was no evidence to the contrary.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Interesting. I appreciate that.

Mr Mortimer: It is interesting.

THE CHAIR: Can I just point you to the reason that we are here today, which is the memorialisation. So, what—

Mr Mortimer: I guessed that, but I need to provide you with some legitimising of myself because I am so condemned by Stanhope and the House family and by the Bell-Carroll family, whose name is really Carroll, not Bell. They do not have permission to use the Bell surname. These are the people we call the "invoice tribe".

Ngunnawal are the invoice tribe, and Ngunnawal is a multimillion-dollar fraud.

THE CHAIR: So you do not want to talk to us about your submission with regard to memorialisation?

Mr Mortimer: I do.

THE CHAIR: You only have five minutes left.

Mr Mortimer: I do. I do, and that is why I put in the submission to you because I believe that Mount Ainslie should be called Ngadya Mount Ainslie, just for a start. They link. The top of the mountain is women's business.

THE CHAIR: The top of the mountain is women's business. Yes, I appreciate that.

Mr Mortimer: Down the lower sides it is certainly not. There is a men's site there, which Doma is currently destroying to put buildings on. It is a very important site, and they all link up. They all link in with Corroboree Park. The women have their track down to Corroboree Park. The men have their course into Corroboree Park, and the two were separate. They would go in single file, one behind the other, to meet up at Corroboree Park—and for very practical reasons. If there is a snake, a snake will go one way or the other. You do not walk side by side.

THE CHAIR: All right.

Mr Mortimer: There was a meeting here in the Chief Minister's office and one of the agenda items on here is "the issue of Shane Mortimer". I have never ever been invited to speak with that Chief Minister or any other chief minister. This is the first time I have ever been invited into the Legislative Assembly—ever—and the discrimination is just unforgivable. Pardon me if I am a little bit cranky about that.

But that site is extremely important, and that is why I brought it up in the commissioner's investigation into grasslands—because of the extraordinary biodiversity of the site, for a start. There are yam daisies there. There are particular spider orchids in there. There is the eastern earless dragon and the legless lizard, and the bogong moths obviously come in. We used to have bogong moths come in—not anymore.

It is also home for the Rosenberg monitor, which is a goanna that only exists on that hill. It is down to about half a dozen; it is really critically endangered. There are also yam daisies, and—what do you call it; I am getting my terms confused—the perennial polyculture of that environment is very important. It is the last remnant of the original grasslands of Canberra. The terraforming of this country has been so complete that that is all that is left, and it needs to be conserved. There is an opportunity there for seed harvesting. There is an opportunity for study. There is an opportunity there for people doing a PhD on things like the grasslands, carbon sequestration, history, geography and geology.

There are a whole pile of reasons why that site needs to be conserved. The ANU has been studying the site from a geological perspective since 1959 because of the unique

Silurian period geology that is up there. Mount Ainslie was a volcano and those tors that you see up there have a unique structure. They are unique anywhere in the world and people do come from overseas to study them because of their uniqueness.

The other unique thing is that Mount Ainslie is volcanic and Black Mountain is sedimentary, and the question is: why? Now, the professor of geology at the ANU, the head of the department there, Brad Opdyke, has finally solved that problem. That is that there is a fault line that runs right through the middle, between those two mountains—right through Canberra. So potentially it is an unstable place, but the grassland is there. The grassland remains and the rocks remain, and it needs to be conserved and to name it after the woman who brought Ainslie into town, who has been completely overlooked from the day she came in with him. They just called her "Ainslie's lubra", but to us she is mother.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. That was a beautiful summation just then. That is what I was hoping for. I am disappointed that we do not have more time. I feel that I have 100 questions, I just—

Mr Mortimer: I am very happy to help you any time that I am available. I live in Hughes. I am not very far away.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Wonderful.

Mr Mortimer: I am not very far away, so it is barely a challenge. But you will see here all of the documentation. I want you to do your due diligence on the people that you are interviewing about this particular site. Caroline Hughes is from Tumut and Wagga, and has no bloodline connection to this country. None. Paul House has no bloodline connection to this country. Nothing.

The Carrolls have no bloodline connection to this country. Their connection is with Molong, near Wellington. The House connection—they do not know where they come from. The Wiradjuri have turned their backs on them because Matilda's mother is a Freeman and the Freemans are the descendants of the black trackers that came here and killed off the population of Goulburn and Yass.

THE CHAIR: All right.

Mr Mortimer: These are the things you need to do your due diligence on that Jon Stanhope has locked away for 100 years, and I really want you to take it seriously, please.

THE CHAIR: Yes. I can tell this—

Mr Mortimer: There is a lot of documentary evidence there. I have given you the Bell genealogy. I have given you the House genealogy in full.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Very comprehensive. Thank you, Mr Mortimer. I really appreciate your time today and the effort that has gone into this. There is a lot of information, and I will look through it myself. Thank you.

Mr Mortimer: Well, I hope you have time to do that.

THE CHAIR: There is a lot to get through.

Mr Mortimer: I can imagine, yes.

THE CHAIR: But I really appreciate your submission and the time that you have taken coming in today. There will be a *Hansard* copy sent to you of what has happened this morning. If you find any discrepancies, please get in touch with the secretary's office and they can make any changes. Again, thank you so much for coming to the committee and for your submission.

Mr Mortimer: That is all right. I hope it goes somewhere. Yes, I have spent a good deal of time to—

THE CHAIR: Yes. A lot of work has gone into this, so, again, thank you.

Mr Mortimer: But the important thing for me is my credibility—through nine generations of women. The mitochondria can be proven, and you can prove your birth mothers in times past but not necessarily your fathers.

THE CHAIR: Yes, that is correct. I wrote down your traditional name, Mingku—grass tree—and your birthday, Christmas Eve.

Mr Mortimer: It is lovely that the same word is used in so many languages, and the whole Ngunnawal thing is something that I am going to have to challenge in a court, unfortunately. But it will be challenged. It will be taken on because it is a giant fraud.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I appreciate your time. Have a good afternoon.

Mr Mortimer: Thank you. All the best.

Hearing suspended from 12.09 to 1.47 pm.

LEBKOWICZ, MS LESLEY
MALINS, MS JACQUI

THE CHAIR: Welcome back to the public hearing of the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality inquiry into memorialisation through public commemoration. I have some housekeeping. Before you speak, can you please acknowledge the privilege statement. You should all have seen that one. Thank you so much for your submission and for coming in today. Please state your privilege statement. Then we will go over to you guys for an opening statement.

Ms Lebkowicz: When you say, "state your privilege statement", do you want us to read that out?

THE CHAIR: No, just acknowledge it.

Ms Lebkowicz: That we have read it?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

MS ORR: Yes, just that you acknowledge and understand it.

THE CHAIR: Acknowledge and understand, yes.

Ms Malins: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Who wants to lead off?

Ms Malins: We only just found, when we got here, that we were both on at the same time. I am happy to. I am possibly over-prepared.

Ms Lebkowicz: I brought a book of Rosemary's poetry—

Ms Malins: Wonderful.

Ms Lebkowicz: in case the conversation flagged!

Ms Malins: Excellent. We might be a very complementary pair. I am a local poet and an organiser and producer of poetry events here in Canberra, including the Poetic City Festival which we had last year. I acknowledge and understand the privilege statement for my appearance here today.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Ms Malins: The submission that I made to this inquiry proposed the recognition of two important Canberra women poets, potentially through an expansion of the Poet's Corner that already exists in Garema Place—

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Malins: or possibly some other appropriate site. But the first of these, Rosemary Dobson, is particularly, I think, someone who should be considered to be included in Poet's Corner. Poet's Corner was commissioned 10 years ago, this year, I think. I think it was 2012 that it was constructed.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Malins: It has three poets represented there: AD Hope, David Campbell and Judith Wright. At the time it was built, I understand that there were calls for Rosemary Dobson to be included, but it was seen, among potentially other reasons, as inappropriate because she was still living at that time. But now, 10 years later, would potentially be a good opportunity to redress that. There is a Rosemary Dobson Park in Canberra, in her name, but I think many Canberra poets think that Poet's Corner would be a better place or a good additional place to recognise her.

I came to poetry quite late, and I did not know of Rosemary or her work until I became part of Canberra's poetry community. That is where I learnt of the significance of her work, the respect with which it is regarded, the way she engaged with Canberra and its surrounds, and then, also, the contribution that she made to the literary landscape within and beyond Canberra through her support, encouragement and mentoring of other poets.

Her family would support this recognition. One of her sons, Ian, made a submission to the inquiry but was unable to attend because he is based in New Zealand. He describes her there as a quiet practitioner of a quiet art form, noting that quiet people and their art deserve all possible respect and recognition. He said that even though she was not comfortable in public roles, she would often launch books or exhibitions or speak about poetry, whether at a university or a primary school, and always thought deeply about what she would say, whether it was a primary school or a university. She gave practical and moral support to younger writers and artists in Canberra, mindful of the obstacles that they faced.

Canberra artist and writer Caren Florance, who also made a submission but I do not believe was able to attend, worked closely with Rosemary in her later years. She says in her submission:

> Her addition to the group is logical; they WERE Canberra's classical poets, they were well known as a peer group, and without her, the group is incomplete.

When I looked at the submissions made to this inquiry, I think almost half of the submissions relate to Rosemary's recognition. So, yes, I guess that is my introductory statement relating to Rosemary.

The other writer and poet who I would recommend be considered for recognition at Poet's Corner, or maybe elsewhere, is Kerry Reed-Gilbert. Aunty Kerry Reed-Gilbert is another woman who made a significant literary impact with her writing. She was also a huge contributor to Australia's literary community and its development. Her recognition is also supported in a submission by a writer, Samantha Faulkner, who I think you might have heard from earlier today.

THE CHAIR: We did earlier, yes.

Ms Malins: Yes. Aunty Kerry Reed-Gilbert was the co-founder and inaugural chairperson of the First Nations Australia Writers Network, the peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers, poets and storytellers. She was a founding member of the ACT's Us Mob Writers, a First Nations writers' group that offers skills, support, mentoring and community to writers across genre.

To quote Jeanine Leane, who is another Indigenous poet of significance:

> … Aunty Kerry nurtured, encouraged and inspired a generation of writers. Her energy and commitment were unfailing right until the end. I spoke to her many times on the phone in the weeks leading up to her passing and she was, as always, working on FNAWN to ensure its ongoing future as a community of First Nations Writers.

Community and family consultation, I think, would be necessary to determine whether Poet's Corner or some other location is the best place for Kerry Reed-Gilbert to be publicly acknowledged. I did, as a courtesy, speak briefly to Aunty Kerry's daughter, Lesa, yesterday to let her know that I was planning to speak about her today. She wished me luck for appearing at the committee today.

THE CHAIR: Fantastic. That is appreciated. It is good to have the pictures. And, yes, I have just done a quick google of where her park is—

Ms Lebkowicz: I went and visited it because I was also in communication with Ian. He wants to do something similar for where they lived in London. I took photographic evidence. It is a bit of a non-event of a park.

THE CHAIR: Is it? Okay.

Ms Lebkowicz: It is a bit of vacant land that has something—a small pillar—that says, "Rosemary Dobson Park". It came about because that bit of land needed to be named. The local community met, and Rosemary's name was the one that came through. There were other contenders, but there was more support for Rosemary. So it is this little bit of not terribly inspiring, but okay, park.

THE CHAIR: Did you have anything you would like to add before we got to questions?

Ms Lebkowicz: Sure. I am just speaking to the value of memorialising Rosemary Dobson. You have probably seen my submission. It is very brief. My connection with Rosemary was very personal. She wrote the blurb for my first book, and it blew me away that someone like Rosemary would write a blurb for a new poet, such as I was then. She really was so self-effacing. In contrast to Judith, who was right out there and very public with her environmental work, Rosemary's character was quite different. She was shy. She was retiring. She was extremely nervous, which I will come back to in a minute. She was a wife and mother and raised three children, and she started publishing poetry before she was 20.

THE CHAIR: Wow.

Ms Lebkowicz: Yes. I was one of the people who was quite put out when she was left out of the initial erection of statues. When she did that blurb for my book—this was before computers, or certainly before Rosemary had a computer; I do not know if she ever did—she sent me this terrific blurb. It was insightful, courteous—all the things you want in a blurb for your first book—and she had whited-out bits and rewritten it. When it came in the snail mail, I rang up and said, "Rosemary, thank you so much. I really appreciate you," and she was self-effacing even about the blurb.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Lebkowicz: You know, I was no-one. This was my first book, and it was coming out in a really prestigious series, but I was blown away by that. I really hope that her "self-effacingness"—if that is a word; it probably is not—does not mean that she gets overlooked for this. It is really important that we remember the quiet women as well.

The poetry was not quiet. Sure, she was not a radical speaker in any way at that time and her poetry is not radical, but it is female. She was friends with Judith Wright, but she was getting by in essentially what was a male world of Australian poetry. And it was very strongly patriarchal. Her skill and talent was recognised, and she was supported by the men, but it cannot have been easy.

THE CHAIR: No.

Ms Lebkowicz: So her work has local recognition, national recognition and international recognition. I think I am just saying what I said in my written submission. Her poetry is personal, it is immediate, but it is universal. She has the quality of poetic sensibility. I would be hard pushed to find many people writing in that way. Partly she was of her time, but she had qualities as a poet that we ought to be recognising.

THE CHAIR: Great. Thank you both for that. I am heartened that more than one person has recommended the one person in more than one submission. One of my questions was: why do you think she was not recognised in Poet's Corner? Obviously, we assume it was because she was still alive at the time.

Ms Lebkowicz: She was alive, yes, but she ended up in a nursing home. It was before she went to the nursing home, but not long before.

THE CHAIR: I did read a couple of things. It is good. I have enjoyed listening to both of you. I do not have any further questions, though. I think you have covered it beautifully.

MS ORR: I wanted to pick up on this idea of recognising the quiet women.

THE CHAIR: The quiet women, yes.

MS ORR: Do you have any ideas on how we can better identify the quiet women who we should be recognising? It is not an easy question; I appreciate that.

Ms Lebkowicz: Nothing is coming to mind. I wish it were. In the arts, as in

everything else, it is the people who are really confident and who will push themselves forward and network who tend to get ahead. It is one of the great sadnesses of the world. If anything comes to mind, I will mention it, but I cannot think of anything. Can you, Jacqui?

Ms Malins: Obviously, the fact that this inquiry is looking at redressing the balance across a range of representations in public acknowledgement and memorialisation is one step. I guess those calls for contributions or ideas to propose people can be framed in ways that make it really clear that you are looking for the people who are unacknowledged or underacknowledged and recognised, or who may be so self-effacing as to not be putting themselves forward. I think that may be something that is already done but could be potentially done more explicitly.

MS ORR: Okay, so looking explicitly when there are calls for nominations and so forth, and making it very clear that it does not have to just be—

Ms Malins: Public figures or—

MS ORR: It can be the quiet people, yes.

Ms Malins: Yes. It is tricky. It is a subtle thing, I guess, thinking about where those calls are publicised and who they are directed to and so on. How they are communicated is another way of potentially reaching people who not only themselves may be quieter but also their supporters and proponents might be quieter as well.

Ms Lebkowicz: Also, you would need to do something about changing the structure to make it workable for people who were shy. Because a lot of quiet, retiring people will automatically not apply for things like that. It is a good question, but it does involve a lot of changes.

MR DAVIS: It is very obvious from your submission and your evidence today that Ms Dobson is somebody worthy of our recognition, but we have had a conversation this morning with some other submitters about the need not just to diversify who we are commemorating and memorialising but to expose more Canberrans to a diversity of people who are worthy to reflect on. I wonder if you would reflect, for the committee, on why it is so important that Ms Dobson be represented at Poet's Corner specifically, as opposed to being memorialised anywhere else in Canberra?

THE CHAIR: Like a street name or something like that.

Ms Lebkowicz: I think it is because two blokes and one other woman are there—you know, two plus two.

Ms Malins: I think it is about the location and who sees it. Having Rosemary Dobson Park is one thing, but it sounds like the kind of place that people will go—

Ms Lebkowicz: A bit of a non-event.

Ms Malins: coincidentally, because they live locally. Obviously, there are opportunities to recognise the local literary figures, whether they have had their

impact locally and beyond, in places like libraries and galleries and so on that are already the places that people with interest in matters literary are going to come across them. But Poet's Corner in Garema Place is somewhere that people go for all kinds of purposes—to go to cafes and bars, to go shopping, to go and just hang out and to go on the way through from the bus station.

In terms of raising that broader public awareness, it took me some time—I would not have been able to give you the names--after I moved to Canberra, even though I had been coming and going. I was here long before it was built, but I think it was some time before I really noticed that it was there and then stopped to read it and see who it was. But even that, in some ways, is a quiet recognition. They are not monumental statues. It is not like we have gargantuan—

MR DAVIS: Well, we do of some.

MS ORR: Like old mate up there.

Ms Malins: figures of these poets. But by the same token it is in a place where people will pass, and pass often enough that eventually they might be curious enough to read the plaque on the front. The plaques on the front have a poem as well as the person's name. So it is an entry point that is offered much more widely and not only to the existing community of interest for those people.

Obviously, there is not room to have every square metre of high-traffic public land covered with memorials, unless we pave it or something, which is always an option too. But, yes, thinking carefully about how that higher profile real estate is being used and allocated across different people in our community is a way of thinking about it. Does that answer your question?

MR DAVIS: It certainly does—particularly about Poet's Corner. I suppose my reservation is that my hope and ambition from this committee inquiry is that we see more women and non-binary people memorialised. My concern is that we see them all memorialised within the two-kilometre radius of the CBD. I am thinking about ways that we can expose more Canberrans to women they should really know about.

Ms Malins: Yes.

MR DAVIS: But you have answered that question really well.

Ms Malins: Obviously, I have explained the importance of that location in that context, but it is not the only place where there is lots of through traffic and exposure. There are other places that can be considered around the city.

MR DAVIS: I am quite convinced sometimes by the simplest of answers. With respect to the bust of two men to one woman, I am convinced by the evening of the scales argument. That is pretty compelling.

Ms Lebkowicz: There is something else. When I was telling people I was coming to talk with you, a number of my friends said, "Oh, I have never seen those statues." And it is not that they have not been in Garema Place; they are incredibly easy to

overlook. While you were talking, I was thinking, "Well, what could you do—put a little garden around it, something to highlight it?" Space is probably at a premium, but even if there were a little bit of a native garden around it, that would make it more visible. It is not very visible at the moment—the two blokes and Judith.

THE CHAIR: I would agree.

MR DAVIS: Yes. Maybe swapping it with the pillow. Every Canberran knows the pillow in Garema Place, right?

Ms Malins: The pillow has a pretty big significance as well—

THE CHAIR: It does.

MR DAVIS: That is right, although most people my age would not know it as the pillow. But that is another conversation.

Ms Malins: Yes. That has just jogged me on a couple of other things. The photos that you saw with my submission are from an event that we had at Poet's Corner, with a public reading of Rosemary's poetry during the poetic sister city festival. That is one of the ways that the energy and effort was kind of drawn together again.

Ms Lebkowicz: It was well attended.

Ms Malins: And then the call for submissions for this inquiry was very timely, coming off the back of that. So some kind of letter or submission was already being plotted, and the invitation came out, which was great. Having that event there certainly drew people's attention to the site. I have mentioned before that I heard rumours of Garema Place's potential renovation, or Poet's Corner being renovated, and, as someone who has used that site a number of times for events, I have a bunch of practical recommendations I would make about how it could be set up in a way that is more easy to use for those purposes if it was going to have some work done and some additional statues at some point.

I double-checked today to make sure that I had not already written a letter outlining those points. I cannot remember now whether I have or not, but I could not find it if I have. But, yes, there are a few things that really could make it much more useful and effective as a place to hold events, including poetry events, where all those people who do not know yet that they love poetry might stumble across it.

THE CHAIR: Absolutely.

Ms Malins: This makes me think about another thing; it is also about that question of how we recognise the quiet people and how we figure out the people who should be memorialised in a public way for posterity. There is this idea that we cannot recognise people while they are still alive. I know there are different ways of recognising people while they are alive, and there are prizes and awards and things like that. But why can't we say that we have already seen that you have made enough of a contribution that we think future generations should be made aware of it while somebody is still alive? Maybe there is a risk that it feels like it is putting their tombstone up or

something, but I do not think we should have to wait until people die before they are recognised in these kinds of ways either.

THE CHAIR: I tend to agree. It is a bit like Albert Namatjira. I think it is just good to recognise them, not to let someone die before we go, "Wow, amazing!"

Ms Malins: They have made such an impact but, shh, don't tell them.

THE CHAIR: Yes, do not tell anyone.

MS ORR: It seems that Poet's Corner is quite active and you use it quite a lot, so it is not only memorialising people but actually providing a quiet little place for poets. Can you run me through the importance of having this area that memorialises people and what it does for your craft and the people who practise it?

Ms Lebkowicz: Jacqui did a lot. I have never organised an event at Poet's Corner, so I think this is your—

Ms Malins: Yes, my question.

Ms Lebkowicz: Yes.

Ms Malins: When I say it is being used, I would not say it is used at a high frequency. Probably in the six or seven years that I have been involved in the community, I am aware of only a half a dozen times that it has been used for events.

THE CHAIR: Right.

Ms Malins: There are some practical things that could be done to make that easier. Obviously, the seasons and weather and so on have an impact on that as well. That said, with the work that has been done in City Walk by the City Renewal Authority, there is the area that I came through today where there was music for lunchtime. So there are certainly more opportunities, more broadly, to hold events in those spaces. Poet's Corner, as I said, could still do with some tweaks to improve that.

I am a bit of a poetry evangelist, and I organised the Poetic City Festival. I guess from the City Renewal Authority's perspective it is around enlivening and activating and place-making in the city. From my perspective, even though I love that thing of refining a craft and connecting with a group of people who already have that kind of interest and are looking at developing it, I also really love to see other people experience the kind of pleasure that I had through discovering that it was something that I found much more enriching and interesting than I perhaps appreciated through my high school poetry education, which was not in the ACT.

THE CHAIR: I do not remember any poetry education at school.

MS ORR: I did some poetry in college.

THE CHAIR: Did you?

MS ORR: Yes, we had a whole six-point unit in it.

THE CHAIR: Wow, great.

Ms Malins: Having the opportunity to have public events where people intersect with these things—people who would not necessarily seek it out—is just another one of those things that can open up different worlds for people.

MS ORR: There have been a few comments in this session about how you are drawing attention to the corner, so that we are not just memorialising but people are seeing and learning about these people. Do you think that is an important part—that the community should be having a bit of a think and giving consideration to how we can not only put these in prominent places but make them usable spaces? I would be interested in your views. I can feel that that is where we are going.

Ms Lebkowicz: I do not think I am answering your question, but what keeps on coming into my mind is that it would be really good to have statues at the local shops.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

MS ORR: Yes.

Ms Lebkowicz: Statues of different artists and poets. Poet's Corner is great, but in a way it is cut off from daily life. That is all.

MS ORR: Yes. That actually goes quite a bit to some of the considerations before the committee.

Ms Lebkowicz: I would like it if there was a poet at my local shops.

Ms Malins: Yes. I agree. I do not know that I necessarily agree that it is cutting it off from daily life, but, given some of the alternatives, it is more integrated into daily life. It is about having a sense that activities like poetry, the arts or the sciences and so on—things that are done here in this community—are worth recognising here but also that there are people who are having an impact more broadly, whether it is across Australia or internationally. And it is about having a sense of this being a part of that much bigger community—and one that is active. Do you know what I mean? It is not dead poets corner, and it does not have to be.

THE CHAIR: No, it is current. It is very much alive.

Ms Malins: It can have the recognition of that legacy and that ancestry but also be a vibrant, living place that continues to nurture the craft.

MS ORR: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Great. Thank you both for your submissions and for your time today. We really appreciate it. There will be a proof transcript of the *Hansard.* Please check that out. If you want anything corrected, please let us know. I do not think there were any questions taken on notice, so that is it. Thank you very much. We really

appreciate your help and your submission.

Ms Lebkowicz: When is the committee reaching a decision? What is the process from here?

THE CHAIR: The process after today is that we will work on recommendations and pull together the report with the recommendations, and then submit that to the Assembly.

Ms Lebkowicz: Right.

THE CHAIR: The time frame for that is going to be dotted between the budget and hearings. Do we advertise when we do these things?

MS ORR: No. We will take all the evidence and the committee secretary has to draft a report.

THE CHAIR: We could commit to letting you know when the report is ready and we put it to the Assembly.

Ms Lebkowicz: I would be interested. Yes, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Great.

MS ORR: Yes. I reckon it will be in a couple of months.

THE CHAIR: Yes, a couple of months. I have no idea about time at the moment.

Ms Malins: That is fine. Thanks very much for your time.

Ms Lebkowicz: Thank you.

WILSON, MS KERRY, Member, Women in Gippsland

Evidence was taken via teleconference—

THE CHAIR: Thank you for your time and for your submission. I remind you of the protections and obligations afforded by parliamentary privilege and draw your attention to the privilege statement which was forwarded to you. Could you please confirm for the record that you understand the privilege implications of the statement?

Ms Wilson: Yes, I do.

THE CHAIR: Great. Before we proceed, would you like to make a brief opening statement?

Ms Wilson: Yes. I will start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which I come to you today, which is Bunurong and Gunai/Kurnai country. I acknowledge the owners, past, present and future.

Are our public places sexist? A recent Plan International podcast "Sexism in the city" explores how a range of gender inequitable displays, many of which the public consume subconsciously, contribute to public spaces that feel uncomfortable for women. Dr Pamela Salen highlighted the prevalence and impact of subliminal sexist messaging, including street names named after famous men, and statues and artwork by men, that make women feel excluded and unsafe. Designing spaces of privileged men in this way can reinforce an imbalance of power between men and women which can have a broad-reaching social implication and contribute to gender inequality.

Armed with that knowledge—that public places are in fact sexist—a small rural group called Women in Gippsland, of which I am a co-founder, have been committed to making the story of women are more visible and have created a campaign to address the gap in public place naming and commemoration called "Put Her Name On It".

With women making up more than 50 per cent of the population, how is it that minimal public spaces bear the names and images and tell the story of incredible women that helped shape our nation, and how is it that women are all but invisible in our public landscape? We believe it is time to change that. It is time to bring women's stories to the forefront of our hearts and minds and give them their rightful place in our history through representation in public place naming and commemoration.

Because of the associated democratic symbolism in relation to the lack of representation in public places and a renewed focus on gender equality, the ACT has an opportunity to act and be responsible for commemoration in public places. With women currently represented by roses, fountains and a nude goddess, we call on the ACT to embed gender equality and First Nations language into place-naming rules; research the current state of public place naming and commemoration via a territory-wide audit; develop a list of women as a reference point for future naming and commemoration; invest in capacity building to support responsible agencies and offices to be equitable and proactive in their work; and monitor progress and tell the positive story of change and equality in public place naming and commemoration.

Public place naming and commemoration is practical, meaningful, measurable and very achievable. It can also have tourism and economic development benefits. We want to create places that truly represent our diverse community and lead the way on commemorative justice in our public places in the ACT and in Victoria, in Gippsland and as a nation.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. I read your submission with great interest. The figures with regard to electorate names, statues—all of that stuff—are staggering.

Ms Wilson: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Do you have Canberra-specific stats at hand?

Ms Wilson: No, I do not have anything. All I know is that at the moment there are no statues. I know that they have invested in one of Enid Lyons and Dorothy Tangney, which should be completed by the end of the year. That is what I do know.

THE CHAIR: Do we know where that is going to go?

MS ORR: I think that might be an NCA one.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

Ms Wilson: I know that there are streets named after women. In fact, you use full names on some of those streets, which is really quite rare. I know that in Victoria they only use surnames. There have been some changes to the rules on where, in the future, first names will be able to be used as well. I think that is a great thing. I know that a woman from my hometown, Beth Boynton, has a street named after her; so I know that there are some. I guess the biggest problem is that no-one has done the comprehensive auditing at a significant level to actually know this. From what I can find around the world, this is a global issue, not just a local issue. We have worked with Bass Coast council. They have done their audit at a municipal level, but other than them there is really a gap.

MS ORR: I note in the submission you say that you would like to see the policy and the guidelines updated. In the ACT a couple of years ago we updated them to say that, going forward, there needs to be some gender equality. But there is a historic gap there. You also talk about the historic gap in your submission and about addressing that. I would be interested to know some of your ideas on how that historic gap can be addressed.

Ms Wilson: In all the work around gender equality—and I work in this space as well—this is the fun stuff. This is really positive. One new subdivision could almost negate the gap, currently, in street names. That is just one area. With statues, in Victoria they have a fund. For the first year it has just been announced who was successful. It is called the Victorian women's public arts fund. It is around developing commemorations of women by women artists. The first six recipients were awarded about two months ago.

Through new subdivisions, grants and even just looking at the existing opportunities, things will be named all the time. Currently, it is quite a reactive approach—I have worked in local government for many years—and it is often based on submissions. We are asking for it to be a more planned, organised, proactive and strategic approach where you create lists and do not wait for the submissions and that reactive approach to come in; you take control of the situation.

MR DAVIS: We had some evidence from somebody this morning who took the view that we should not be commemorating anyone anywhere, if I can paraphrase the view. One example that the gentleman raised, which I think we can have sympathy for, is that there have been men in history who have been commemorated who we later find out probably were not in keeping with modern values and maybe not people we wanted to commemorate. Do you have a position on this? To address this inequality, do we focus our attention on naming new statues, new streets or new places after women, or do you think there is some work to be done in reflecting on some places that are already named after men who may not be, on reflection, men we necessarily want to memorialise?

Ms Wilson: My approach always is to firstly identify what we know and to promote those things. That is what we are doing in Victoria at the moment. We are actually identifying where there are commemorations of women and looking at how we might promote those. Secondly, it is a really positive thing to create public spaces that tell stories, like living museums. I would not like to see us not do this. I think there are some great opportunities around public art, and certainly community engagement around these commemorations and storytelling initiatives.

While there are some things that could be addressed, our primary focus, number one, is to get more, and to tell those stories, rather than to necessarily look at the negative side of it. There is also an opportunity. The electorate of McMillan, which is where I live in Gippsland—I have spent most of my life in Gippsland—was changed to Monash. So there is a precedent around changing that. McMillan was identified, after a long period, as maybe not being as good a character as they first thought. But there are still plenty of other commemorations that have not yet been addressed. I think there is room to do that.

I know that in Victoria they are changing some other names around things. I would not like to see it stop because of that fear; that is a rare occasion. Usually your naming rules can provide some guidance on how to address those things. We do not want to be offensive, of course. You would want to address anything that is totally offensive. I just think there are many incredible stories of women to tell that have not been told and that are practically invisible in our history, and it is time to tell those stories. Bringing those stories into public places creates feelings of belonging and inclusion, and safety. I think that for all of those benefits it is important that we continue with naming and commemoration.

MR DAVIS: I just wanted to pick you up on the safety part. It goes to some of the comments that you made in your opening statement around the implicit bias that it puts onto all of us when so many things that we connect with in our daily lives are named after men or memorialise men. We have been talking today about memorialisation in its full context, and not just naming parks, playgrounds and statues

after men. In the ACT, for example, we have grants and annual awards that honour women like Audrey Fagan and Sue Salthouse. Do you have reflections on why it is important to make sure that we name our public places and public spaces after women, as opposed to the value of those other forms of memorialisation?

Ms Wilson: I think it is broad. Broadly, we need to do that. Where there is already an inequality, we have a responsibility to look at balancing that up. We know that the downside of inequality is that it perpetuates violence against women and a whole lot of other things. Unless we are going to de-name some of those other things, I think we have a responsibility, number one, to balance that out.

As for those awards and all that, I think it is really important that we promote those things. The naming of those awards is one thing but it is also the equality in who gets those awards. We know that time and again the awards have also been unequal, as high as our national awards and honours. That often takes a lot of work too to create criteria that do not perpetuate the problem.

THE CHAIR: I certainly have a couple of recommendations out of this one. Is there anything that you would like to leave us with, Kerry?

Ms Wilson: I strongly encourage you to take up this challenge. In Victoria, as I think I have written in my submission, I now work with Gender Equity Victoria. I started the campaign and put a name on it as part of a voluntary group. I am now in a paid position. It has been funded through the state. They are looking at capacity building and how we can actually make change—the rules have been changed—on the ground. I know that nothing happens without policy but also nothing happens without investment and resourcing. I just encourage you to think about those things as well.

THE CHAIR: Thank you so much. On behalf of the committee, we thank you for your submission and your time today. You will receive a proof transcript to give you the opportunity to review that. If there are errors or you have concerns, please let the secretary know. I do not think there were any questions taken on notice.

Ms Wilson: Thank you.

Hearing suspended from 2.32 to 3 pm.

GENTLEMAN, MR MICK, Minister for Planning and Land Management
BRADY, DR ERIN, Deputy Director-General, Planning and Sustainable Development, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate
LEDWIDGE, MR GREG, ACT Surveyor-General, Statutory Planning, Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

THE CHAIR: Welcome back to the public hearing of the Standing Committee on Economy and Gender and Economic Equality. We are inquiring into memorialisation through public commemoration. We are being recorded and broadcast live. Before people speak today, please acknowledge the privilege statement that you should have all received. We welcome Minister Gentleman, Mr Greg Ledwidge and Dr Erin Brady. Thank you so much for coming today and for the government's submission. Would you like to kick off with a statement?

Mr Gentleman: Thanks very much, Chair, and thanks to the committee. I acknowledge that I have read the privilege statement and understand its implications. Thanks for inviting me here today for the hearing. I am here because, as the Minister for Planning and Land Management, I have responsibility for the Public Place Names Act. The act covers the naming of suburbs, streets, parks and locations in the ACT. There is a legislative provision in the act that requires me to consider the representation of women when considering names for these places. That provision has been in the act since 2002. Many suburbs and streets in Canberra were obviously given names before 2002 and I recognise that there is some catching up to do in terms of gender representation.

The naming of buildings and artwork sits outside this place names framework. Government building names are the responsibility of the relevant minister for that directorate. That is within the purview of the ACT government. I would remind the committee, too, that the National Capital Authority has purview over matters that are within the parliamentary triangle. The place names unit within the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate are able to provide their expertise in historical research and sensitivities to other government directorates as well.

In terms of naming places after members of the LGBTIQ+ community, there is obviously a difficulty in identifying the gender and sexual identities of historical figures. The ACT government consults with families and descendants of people who are proposed for commemoration, and it may be the wish of the family to focus on the achievements of an individual in their chosen field, rather than on revealing sensitive personal information. As our society is changing, we may see more people recognised as openly identifying as part of the LGBTIQ+ community that, historically, may not have had such recognition.

I have asked the ACT place names unit to invite agencies such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body, the ACT Office for Women and the ACT Office of LGBTIQ+ Affairs to offer suggestions of names into the future. With that, Chair, we will hand it back to the committee for questions. Dr Brady and Mr Ledwidge are ready for your questions.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Minister, in the time that you have been minister and in

charge of this area, how many streets or suburbs have you fought to try to get named after women?

Mr Gentleman: I have generally given, as I said, an overview to the directorate, and therefore through EPSDD, on our view of a gender balance for the ACT. I will pass to Dr Brady to talk about how many have actually occurred.

Dr Brady: I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. As the minister said, there are 12—and I might call on Mr Ledwidge to give the details in terms of timing—suburbs that are named after females. Some of those include Taylor, after Florence Taylor, an architect; Macnamara, after Dame Jean Macnamara, a scientific and medical researcher; Wright, after Judith Wright, the poet; and Franklin, after Stella Miles Franklin, the writer. There are a number of others. I believe it is 12 suburbs, at least, that are named after females. I am not sure whether Mr Ledwidge can offer any further detail and timing.

Mr Ledwidge: I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. I am responsible for the place names unit. I cannot really add more to the names of those particular suburbs but I can say that, in forthcoming suburbs, we are trying to achieve a gender balance in terms of those coming up in the next few years. In the past, most of the suburbs were named after the National Memorials Ordinance of the commonwealth. It carried right through until self-government. The ACT government has only been responsible from about 1990 onwards. As to the probable perceived imbalance of gender names, a lot of that comes from those previous decades.

THE CHAIR: I think that is how we find ourselves in this situation. Is there a list that you currently have? How does it come about that you—

Mr Gentleman: Through the place names committee. They provide that historical research and then make the announcements.

Dr Brady: People can nominate, or the place names committee will identify potential names. Often the suburbs or streets are around a theme, whether it is architecture or writing or something like that. The place names committee is supported by the place names unit. They do a lot of research into the history. They do the contacting of families and a lot of the follow-up that I think people do not realise is necessarily behind giving a name to a place.

They do quite a lot of research. We have also offered that as an available sort of assistance for buildings, albeit that the minister said that we do not necessarily do that. It is a really knowledgeable group of people that know how to do the research and know how to contact people. There are sometimes sensitivities around whether families would like their names, or someone's name, used. The place names unit does a lot of research on that.

MS ORR: A few of the other witnesses today have raised the historical imbalance. Knowing that the ACT has done a lot to address inequality from a point forward, and we are doing quite well on that, has any consideration been given to the historical legacy of trying to find a way to start to address that and, if so, what sorts of things are being done?

Mr Gentleman: It is still, I think, an internal conversation at this point. We have not made any formal decision to change that.

Mr Ledwidge: I can probably add one thing. Currently, we are looking at co-naming the suburb of Spence, so it would be both a man and a woman commemorated in that. It is a complex process because you have to discuss and negotiate with the family or the person already commemorated. It is not an easy process, but that is underway.

In terms of trying to address the imbalance in existing suburbs, be it the streets or the suburb names, that is quite tricky because there are lots of complications. If you are talking about changing a street name, all the lessees that may have addresses off that street are affected. It can be quite a difficult process if you decide to go down that path. But we do try, as much as possible, to correct that imbalance as we go forward, in every circumstance.

MS ORR: The other thing that has come up in various parts today is that it is not just having, say, the street name but being able to access information about the person that it is named after; so getting that recognition of what they have done. My understanding is that in the ACT it is all online; you can go online. How can you source that information? Can you just run the committee through how you do that? Is it just a Google search to look it up?

Dr Brady: Yes; it is in the naming instrument.

Mr Ledwidge: There is a short section in the naming instrument that outlines what that person is being commemorated for. That is the first option. However, the second option is through the ACTmapi website, to go and source some of that information. We encourage people to go there. Occasionally we do have problems with the website. Get in contact with us if there is a problem and we can provide that information directly to anyone who is inquiring.

MS ORR: But individuals have to look up the website; it has to be at their own initiative?

Mr Ledwidge: Currently, that is the situation.

MS ORR: A few people have raised with us the idea of links, like QR codes that you can just click through when you are at a site, to find more information, to make it a bit easier. The other one that has come up is, I think, the City of Yarra, down in Melbourne, their city council. They have a little line underneath. The street names are at the top and then there is a bit of information in smaller font saying "in recognition of" and whatever reason has led them to that. Has any consideration been given to these alternative ideas of promoting the reason that this person is being memorialised here in the ACT?

Mr Gentleman: We do do it, I guess. When we look at historic walks, for example, across the ACT, we usually have some signage with a QR code that gives you quite detailed information about the area, the naming of the walk or the location, for example. That might be something that we could have a look at.

THE CHAIR: The website that you mentioned—

Mr Ledwidge: That is the ACTmapi website.

Mr Gentleman: It is our interactive planning map.

MR DAVIS: Minister, when people contacted me about this inquiry—and I have had conversations with the community about this inquiry—interestingly, the example that got brought up with me the most was recent art that was installed near the two new buildings outside the Legislative Assembly, the tall rusty chap. Do you have any reflections for the committee on situations like that, where a private company, a private contractor, commissions their own art or commemoration, and how that might intersect with any plans the government has to address the gender imbalance and, additionally, how, if at all, that intersects with the additional work you are doing in terms of the planning review? I cannot think of softer words than "obligations", "requirements" or "expectations" that that might put on those who develop property in our city to be conscious of those things in their developments.

Mr Gentleman: I think we have a strong plan in the place names act and the changes that were made back in 2002 to ensure gender equality. When it comes to private enterprises, and particularly artworks, that does not come under the place names committee. That would certainly come under arts, if arts were being produced by the government, for example. If it was a private company, we would assist them as much as we could with the historical opportunity and advice that we could provide for them.

MR DAVIS: What steps does the government take to address a situation where a private developer, or a private contractor in that instance, commissions art that encourages this gender imbalance we have heard about all day today? Putting it in very simple speak, does the government go, "There is a brand-new piece of art that commemorates a man that we weren't in charge of and that we're not a part of," and therefore, that will have a flow-on effect to what the government subsequently commissions and installs in public places?

Mr Gentleman: I think that is something we have to take on ourselves and ensure that, whatever we are doing, we provide that gender balance. It is an interesting example you give, actually, because that sculpture is on national land as well, so it is NCA controlled. Certainly, in the commissioning of buildings, if we had control over it, we could make suggestions to proponents that they should consider a balance.

MR DAVIS: In your role as the planning minister who has some degree of oversight over what people build and where they build it, can you identify any specific steps during that process where government if not intervenes but at least provides advice when someone says, "I'm going to build this apartment building or this commercial block and it will include public art"? Where do we step in and say, "These are some considerations we would like you to have when you consider what art or installations you put in this space"?

Mr Gentleman: Is there anything in the DA?

Dr Brady: I think it would be in the development assessment domain when it comes in and it is identifying what is on a site. That would be the opportunity to, first of all, probably engage with the proponent. Greg, do you want to add to that?

Mr Ledwidge: Beyond the DA stage, we do, as the place names unit, encourage the builders and the developers to contact us. Not all of them do so. As to the ones that do, we try to guide them through the process to understand some of the issues around the naming of that building. When it comes to an art installation, we try to guide them with that as well, to be aware of it. As the minister has pointed out, we have no direct control over that. As in the past, they have just gone and done their own thing.

MR DAVIS: Do you have a rough estimate, over a period of time, say the last five years—I am happy for this to be a question on notice—based on all the DAs that come past the minister's desk and that the government considers? How many are where the proponent has engaged with government or sought the advice of government about their art or installations?

Mr Gentleman: I do not know that we would have that information. They do not have to tell us the name of the building, for example, or an artwork in the DA application. We are looking to see that a DA conforms with the planning regulations. The place names committee does that extra work that government does in that hierarchy of work.

MR DAVIS: In the instance that Mr Ledwidge mentions, where he says that there have been occasions where a proponent has engaged with government to seek some advice and get some frameworks in—"What should we think about naming it and what should we install et cetera?"—surely we would be able to deduce how many DAs we have approved in a certain period and then how many of those you have provided some advice to?

Mr Ledwidge: When they engage with the place names unit directly, which may be separate to the DA process or the amendment process, it is usually where we have a relationship with a builder or a developer and they often come and talk with us. That tends not to be captured in any metrics.

MR DAVIS: I understand; thank you.

THE CHAIR: Minister, would it be on your radar to add that to the DA process, that they do consult with the naming committee before DAs are approved?

Mr Gentleman: It is certainly something that we could look at. I would be interested in what recommendations the committee make after their inquiry, and I will ask the directorate to have a look at that.

THE CHAIR: With regard to Scullin, you said that you were looking at—

Mr Ledwidge: Spence.

THE CHAIR: Spence. Why Spence?

Mr Ledwidge: Because both the person who was originally commemorated and the lady we are now looking at co-naming have the same surname. So it works in terms of the co-naming principles of any location, suburb or street, or whatever.

MS ORR: Is that something we could look at in Lawson, for the same reason—Henry Lawson and his mother, Louisa?

Mr Gentleman: Louisa, yes.

MS ORR: That was not my question, though. We have heard quite a bit from some of the other submitters today about recognising the quiet people—the people who go about doing things and doing a lot of service within our community but fly a bit under the radar and usually, from what we have had described today, would not draw attention to themselves or the good work they do. They are really appreciated within the community, but they are not necessarily high profile or visible in our media. What opportunities currently exist for recognising those people?

Mr Gentleman: In our situation, members of the community could write to the directorate. There is a link on the EPSDD website which allows you to write to the place names committee and make suggestions for people that should be commemorated. I would suggest that is probably the best link.

MS ORR: Some of the ideas that have been put forward have been not necessarily to have places named after them per se but maybe plaques in areas where they did a lot of community service, in recognition. I take it that there is probably not a process per se for that?

Dr Brady: There is a process; it is more for plaques around parks and reserves. Under Parks and Conservation, in relation to the land that they are the custodians of or manage, there is a process. As the minister said, you can go online and recommend a location and give a reason why you think a plaque somewhere might be appropriate.

MS ORR: This one might not be for you, so I appreciate that you may need to take it on notice. We have had quite a bit raised with us on Poet's Corner and the inclusion of some people into Poet's Corner. If the committee wanted an update from the government on the consideration of Poet's Corner, would that go to you or would that be to different minister?

Mr Gentleman: Probably TCCS.

Dr Brady: In terms of naming the—

MS ORR: Yes. Given that it has been raised with the committee that there are some people that the local community would like to see included in Poet's Corner who were not in a position to be included when it was established, has the government given any thought to how that could be updated, for lack of a better word?

THE CHAIR: Yes. Is it a living Poet's Corner and does it grow? Will there be more busts and, I guess, what will be the cost of those and what consideration has the government given with regard to that?

MS ORR: Yes. Essentially, if it is done, we are not going to look at it again, or is there an opportunity to consider adding to Poet's Corner?

Mr Gentleman: We can certainly have a look at that.

THE CHAIR: I am not sure that this is for you guys either, but do you know the cost for the busts or small monuments? If we rename Spence, what is the financial impact to the government? If we are redoing street signs, what does a street sign cost? You go to every suburb and you see the big sign. What are the costs involved if we do go down this track of changing and updating?

Mr Gentleman: Some aspects of that would sit with different directorates—CRA, for example, with Poet's Corner. TCCS would be in charge of changing the signage. I think it would be quite a long and detailed question, depending on what aspect of change would need to occur. If it is a whole suburb, it could be quite expensive. There is signage and then, of course, as we were talking about with the leases, you have to go in and detail a change to every single lease if you are changing the complete name for a suburb. If it is co-naming, that is not an issue.

Mr Ledwidge: That is an important distinction.

THE CHAIR: That is right; if we are co-naming. If the committee makes a recommendation that there is a review and things become co-named or a street sign now has a line underneath it, so we will be changing street signs, what will the cost to government be? I would hate to make a recommendation that puts us in the hole for a lot of money.

Mr Gentleman: It would depend on each one.

THE CHAIR: It would be TCCS, I guess.

Dr Brady: I think TCCS would have more relevant information, or even the Suburban Land Agency, perhaps, in terms of new suburbs.

MS ORR: I thought of my question that I was forgetting. Some of the other witnesses we have had today also said that they would love to see statues—which I appreciate is probably a little bit outside of your ministerial portfolios—at their local shops, to start to bring memorialisation of women and more diverse aspects of our community into their local area and out of the CBD. I would be really interested to hear the government's views on how possible and practical that could be.

Mr Gentleman: It is certainly practical, if you were doing representations of people in areas of the CBD or local areas—for example, local shops. We have done it. I think there are quite a number. Hughes shops has some representations of people that have been committed to the territory, recognising the work that they have done. So it is practical in that sense. There is a cost with all of that, of course, and we need to be aware of what the local community would want as well. I think Hughes was quite a success, the Hughes shops and the experience of the commemoration there.

Dr Brady: I think there are probably opportunities where we are doing place planning around centres or particular areas. That is probably the opportunity, as the minister says, for the community to participate and make suggestions through those processes, because they would be part of the public realm implementation, which would be across different parts of government. In terms of the planning for that, place planning around centres would be a good start.

THE CHAIR: Great.

MR DAVIS: Minister, I am interested in that point in particular, to pick you up on place planning, because over the last few years the government has made a number of investments in my electorate of Brindabella, in the Tuggeranong town centre in particular: the Anketell Street redevelopment, laneways to the lake and now a commitment to develop a foreshore.

It has been noted by some of my constituents that the area has a dearth of public art. Certainly, they welcome a lot of the changes, but there is not too much public art in that space. I would like some historical context on how, if at all, during those redevelopments, public art and memorialisation and commemoration were considered in those investments.

Additionally, I would like to know how much, if at all, the place naming committee and a consideration for memorialisation is a part of the foreshore upgrades. I ask that question because I have certainly had it put to me by constituents who have been engaged with the contractor doing the consultation that there are plans to, for lack of a better word, subdivide parts of the foreshore to create some spaces purposely. I am curious to see if there are any plans to commemorate more women and diverse people in those places.

Mr Gentleman: It is a good question. What we did with Tuggeranong was to go out to the people and ask them what they would like to see there. Then we took that on board when the plans were made for the upgrades. There was quite good community feedback, I think, on what should happen in those areas. I think the outcome has been pretty good.

There could be more public art. There is room enough for it, I suppose. But there is quite a lot of public art in Tuggeranong already, and sometimes we take it for granted, as we look around the foreshore. There is always the opportunity for more, I think. There is a cost involved in that. Sometimes, when you are looking at upgrades, the feedback you get from the community is, "I would rather have some sunshades, some barbecues or rest rooms than a piece of public art." And other people will argue the other way as well. We try to take that on board and redefine what we are doing in regard to what is being asked.

MR DAVIS: Just to confirm: has there been any work specifically with TCCS, who I understand are the lead agency on the foreshore upgrades, to consider public art and memorialisation as part of those upgrades?

Mr Gentleman: You would probably have to ask them.

MR DAVIS: Okay.

THE CHAIR: Great. Thank you. On behalf of the committee, I am really grateful for your submission today and your time this afternoon. A transcript will be provided to you, so please read that. If you have any changes, let the secretary know. Regarding questions on notice, I think there might have been one on Poet's Corner. Did we get that for—

MS ORR: It would be good if that could be taken—

Mr Gentleman: It is CRA.

MS ORR: on notice. I appreciate that it is not for your portfolio, but if we could put that on notice in some way to get a response, that would be good.

THE CHAIR: We might have to write a letter to the appropriate minister.

Dr Brady: Yes; it will be CRA and TCCS.

THE CHAIR: Okay. We will deal with that. Thank you so much.

Mr Gentleman: Great.

THE CHAIR: Mr Davis, did you have your question on notice? You mentioned something. I think it was answered.

MR DAVIS: No, no. I had all mine covered.

THE CHAIR: Wonderful. Thank you all for coming. We appreciate your time. Have a good afternoon.

Mr Gentleman: Thank you.

Dr Brady: Thank you.

Mr Ledwidge: Thank you.

WATCHIRS, DR HELEN, President and Human Rights Commissioner, ACT Human Rights Commission

THE CHAIR: We will move on to our next witness appearing today, Dr Helen Watchirs, President and Human Rights Commissioner, from the ACT Human Rights Commission. On behalf of the committee, we thank you for appearing today and for your written submission. I would like to remind you of the privilege statement and the obligations and protections afforded to you. Please state for the record that you understand the implications of the statement.

Dr Watchirs: Yes, I do. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: You can open with a brief for us.

Dr Watchirs: Thank you so much for the opportunity to make a submission and to appear today. I certainly feel very strongly about the issue of memorialisation reflecting the diversity of our community. It is actually an obligation under the Human Rights Act, section 40B, to implement it. Section 27 of the Human Rights Act, subsection (1), refers to cultural and linguistic minorities and subsection (2) refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

People's acts and decisions must reflect the Human Rights Act. Also, section 8 of the Human Rights Act protects equality in the community. There definitely is, I think, an under-representation of women, non-binary people, First Nations people and culturally and linguistically diverse people in our naming of places and buildings—and statues, like Andrew Inglis Clark, the rusty man that has recently been installed in our precinct.

I think it really reflects the undervaluing of these communities and does not reflect the community as it stands today. You cannot be what you cannot see. Without that reflection of identity and the contribution they have made to Canberra, I think it is more difficult to inspire future generations of these people. We are a special community because of our rich diversity. We were the first human rights jurisdiction in Australia. We had the highest vote on marriage equality. There are a lot of special things here to celebrate and I think our memorialisation needs to catch up.

We do have the Public Place Names Act and guidelines. The act is 1989, the guidelines 2021, and they could be updated. The terms of reference for the committee have nine categories, two of which are Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. But I think if it had a legislative base, even in being in the guidelines, that might make it stronger and make communities feel that they are reflected in the committees that make these decisions.

The problem is that it all depends on public nominations and that is a reactive process. We have been lobbying for a long time to have a positive duty in the Discrimination Act, and that looks like it may be happening with the current review. I think that to audit what the breakdown of current place names is, in terms of what it reflects of our community, would be a good idea, and to have a more proactive policy. I know the guidelines do say that every 10 years they need to look at what the reflection of males

and females is, but it is still, I think, only 40 to 60 per cent, so there is still a way to go. In terms of Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse names, it is much worse, so there is a lot of work to be done there.

There are good examples, such as the campsite at Red Hill, on Durville Crescent, near Manuka, where it reflects what the story is, and people can see that. They may not know it until they go there and come upon it. Other people, like Matilda House, whose previous generations camped there when she was a child, know the significance. We cannot underestimate the impact of recognising that and celebrating that as a community. I think it is really good that this committee is doing that at the moment.

THE CHAIR: You mentioned a 60-40 percentage. What was that for?

Dr Watchirs: I think it was in the government's submission, saying the current breakdown.

THE CHAIR: Is that the current state of play in Canberra? There is a 60-40 split?

Dr Watchirs: Yes, but I think that is only the last 10 years. I am not sure whether it is a full audit.

MS ORR: If you go back beyond the last 10 years, it is actually quite—

Dr Watchirs: It would be more like 90 per cent.

THE CHAIR: So overall, if we did an audit right now, it is not 60 per cent male, 40 per cent female; that is just what has happened in the last 10 years.

Dr Watchirs: That is only the last 10 years.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

Dr Watchirs: I think the guidelines were changed in 2002, so it is 20 years ago that they were changed—

THE CHAIR: Twenty years ago.

Dr Watchirs: to make it more reflective, so we still have not caught up.

MS ORR: Yes. I think we have done a lot better since the guidelines were changed.

THE CHAIR: Since then, yes.

MS ORR: But it is that historical discrepancy that has—

Dr Watchirs: A lot of catching up.

MS ORR: Yes, that has not been addressed.

THE CHAIR: So what would you like to see? Is there anything in particular that stands out for you? You mentioned an audit of where we are at the moment, but have you got any thoughts on whether it is more statues, or is it street names? We were just discussing that with the minister.

Dr Watchirs: And artworks.

THE CHAIR: And artworks.

Dr Watchirs: I think every possible way is important: to do an audit, to find out what the current situation is and how far we have to catch up and then to have a proactive system of naming, not just relying on—

THE CHAIR: Submissions.

Dr Watchirs: Yes. Because it might be a person's family member who died. My husband died and I acquiesced to having a street named after him, Terry Connolly. A lot of people may not feel in a position where they can do that. NGOs, I am sure, would be happy to contribute, and community groups. A more proactive role could be encouraged, and a positive duty on the government to get these nominations. I know the Women in Gippsland have got a campaign—"Put Her Name On It".

THE CHAIR: "Put Her Name On It", yes.

Dr Watchirs: Similarly, the art gallery has "Know My Name". You have to do positive things for things to happen. It cannot just kind of gradually creep up; it really needs a boost.

THE CHAIR: We did hear from one of the witnesses today who said a few times that the quiet people would never, as you say, put their name forward, or the family might think, "Oh well, she would never want her name put forward." But I do think there has to be a little bit of that proactivity. What we just heard in the previous session was that it takes a while, looking up the history and investigating and chatting to the families. It does seem a little reactionary. I do not know; that is just my comment.

MS ORR: I was just interested in the idea you raised of an audit, and what you would like to see an audit consider. Would it be straightforward—how many places are named after men and how many places are named after women—or would you like to see it go further than that?

Dr Watchirs: I think it is really important to capture First Nations, to reflect them in the audit so that we know exactly what we have got.

MS ORR: Okay. I think we touched on this a little bit too: the ways that we can memorialise people. Street names are obviously one of them, and buildings. You said artwork. Is there anything else that you think we should be adding to that?

Dr Watchirs: Geographic names are another one—hills. I know there is dual naming in the place names act, so that is a good thing.

MS ORR: Great.

MR DAVIS: In your submission you noted the requirement to have an Indigenous member of the ACT place names committee, and that is at the discretion of the minister, via the terms of reference. Do you think that should be legislated for?

Dr Watchirs: Yes, it could easily be in the guidelines. That has a legislative basis. It would not be that complicated to change. It is just a bit insecure and, if we want something seriously done, it needs to be more easily found and have a greater status.

MR DAVIS: What advice would you have for us in terms of framing some of our recommendations to government? When it comes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, it is not just about recognising more First Nations people in names; it is about working with the community so that they can nominate their own people and be a part of the process, rather than us deciding in rooms like this who the First Nations people are that we would like to commemorate. What advice do you have about how we can strengthen those processes?

Dr Watchirs: The Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs could probably provide some secretariat support in capacity-building for community organisations and individual families, to seek them out, regarding what place names they would recommend and what the current breakdown is. I know there is an issue between Ngunnawal and Ngambri recognition that needs to be acknowledged and, hopefully, addressed in the future, particularly with treaty making. And now, coming soon, the Uluru Statement from the Heart will have a national basis.

All of these things align to implement section 27(2) of the Human Rights Act. We have the oldest living culture in the world, and that needs to be reflected in modern things, not just generational things that have survived. Languages and other manifestations of culture are equally important.

MR DAVIS: I only have one other question for you, but it is on a slight tangent, if that is okay. We are, before all other things, local members, and I have had a bit of a theme today of asking questions about the diversity of our public art and memorials, and recognition across the city. Do you have any reflections on what appears to me to be a concentration of these monuments or commemorations within our CBD, and what value-add it might bring to all Canberrans to think more creatively about dispersing that throughout our town centres, throughout our community?

Dr Watchirs: When we dispersed Floriade, it worked really well for local communities to have a say. I know that with the artwork in my local community people notice. If you do your shopping there, you see what is important. For the people whose family that reflects, or the community they reflect, that is really important recognition.

With my local park, Rosemary Dobson Park, there was a process of voting for who it should be named after. I think that most of the other names were male names. I was really proud that her name was selected, and she had a connection with that. It is all about connecting. I think it even links into our wellbeing indicators of culture being reflected through artwork and place names. It is really important that we reflect the

diversity of the community that we have and the changing values and mores. Gender identity was not thought of in our constitution, or even in our self-government act in 1989; the place names act is the same age—1989. There needs to be updating, and that needs to be reflected in our celebration and recognition of the diversity of Canberra.

MR DAVIS: Further to my line of questioning about making sure that art commemoration is more evenly distributed across our city, what are some good supports that the government currently is not providing that we should provide to communities in smaller suburbs or streets to be really involved in the decision-making regarding identifying that a name is needed or that a name should be changed, and then identifying who the new person is who should be commemorated? How can we strengthen the process of bringing people along on that journey?

Dr Watchirs: The place names committee is not a bad model—having a number of people come together, and they are paid for their time, for contributing. With artworks, I think there is a $200,000 budget line for public art, which is not a lot of money for a city of this size; it probably should be increased. There are quite a lot of public-private partnerships. I gather that, with respect to the Andrew Inglis Clark statue, the Snow Foundation had some involvement with that.

I think we should be pursuing all kinds of funding mechanisms. It should not just be the government providing funding; communities probably would like to be involved. But there needs to be something proactively done, and I think campaigns are a good way of doing that. We know that, with the honours system, not enough women are recognised. There has been a campaign of putting women up for honours, as well as people of diverse gender and Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. There needs to be action on all fronts. Memorialisation is just the tip of the iceberg. People have to be deceased to have their name used, so we are talking about an earlier generation, and we are catching up on that.

MS ORR: When you say that it is the tip of the iceberg, what comes next?

Dr Watchirs: The actual community. When you walk around, who do you see? You see people of different genders and identities, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, First Nations people. That is our real community, and memorialisation is just the tip reflected in that.

THE CHAIR: Do you think it is important to memorialise people before they die or is it important to focus on catching up on those that we have missed?

Dr Watchirs: I think it is about catching up on those we have missed, but I do think it is a bit artificial if we cannot recognise people who are currently living. There is a bit of an artificial boundary that maybe could be changed. With artwork, there is not that requirement; that is much more open.

THE CHAIR: We did have one submitter today who said there should be no memorialisation of people. That was basically the gist of the submission. An argument would be that, if someone has died, we have a fuller picture of their life and how honourable they were. If they are still living, there is room for error. What are

your thoughts about that?

Dr Watchirs: For long-term place names, I can understand why there is that requirement for the person to be deceased and for the family to have a year's reflection on what they would like done and why. When you are in the grieving process, the first year is the most difficult. I do not think that is a bad idea, but for other forms of recognition, like artwork, the sky is the limit. It should be for people who are living, as well. It is easy to recognise the contribution later, rather than in the middle of it.

MR DAVIS: With respect to that submission and the gentleman we heard from this morning who presented that submission, we spoke about some of the ways that the ACT government is commemorating women; in particular, the Audrey Fagan grants and the Sue Salthouse grants. I would be interested in your reflections on the value of a bust in Garema Place or a street named after you, as opposed to some slightly different ways to honour and commemorate people that, one could argue, pay it forward a little bit—supporting other people working in the same fields for which they were known. Do you think there is more value in one, as opposed to the other, or do you think that the government could be doing more in one area over another?

Dr Watchirs: I like the combined idea. Certainly, Audrey Fagan was an incredible person. To see that scholarship every year, and the young women who receive that scholarship, it has an impact, and a ripple effect on all the people around them. It is really moving to attend the Women's Day awards.

Similarly, with respect to Sue Salthouse, there is a memorial for her tomorrow night at University of Canberra. She made a huge contribution to people with disability. Hers was an acquired disability later in life, so she had a really good vision of what it was like to live without one and with one. She was one of the most positive people you could ever imagine. If you see things like that, it makes you smile because, although they are not with us, their legacy lives on. It is tangible for people who do not know them, and that is what I like about the awards. People who may not have heard of that person before applying for an award, they learn about the story and that lives on, and their values live on.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for your submission and for your time today. There will be a proof transcript forwarded to you, so please review that and let us know if you have any concerns. I do not think there were any questions taken on notice. We will close the hearing today. Thank you for your time.

Dr Watchirs: Thank you so much.

The committee adjourned at 3.46 pm.