

FINDING HER @ HER PLACE

Honouring Women Through Place Naming and Commemoration

A guide for individuals, families, community groups and organisations

Her Place Women's Museum · findingher.org.au

Women have shaped Victoria, its communities, institutions, environment and culture. Yet historically, fewer than one in five public places have been named after women.

Her Place Women's Museum is committed to changing that. This guide is for anyone who wants to honour a woman or gender-diverse person through public commemoration, whether by naming a road, park, laneway, or reserve, or by creating a mural, plaque, sculpture, or other permanent recognition.

Finding Her @ Her Place Women's Museum promotes greater diversity and equity in place naming across Victoria and is designed to be used alongside the [Finding Her](#) digital map, which celebrates women already commemorated in Victoria's public spaces.

1 Who can be commemorated?

Not every nomination will meet the requirements of Victoria's official naming rules, but commemoration can take many forms, and a formal place name is only one of them. This section explains both.

For formal place naming (roads, parks, reserves, localities)

Victoria's [Naming rules for places in Victoria](#) set specific criteria for commemorative place names. The person being honoured must:



Be deceased

Naming living people is generally discouraged under GNV rules, though not absolutely prohibited.



Have made a significant and lasting contribution

This can be political, social, cultural, scientific, sporting, environmental, humanitarian or community-based. Local significance counts – it does not need to be statewide or national.



Have a genuine connection to the place being named

The naming rules require a demonstrable 'link to place' – the person should have lived, worked, served or made a meaningful contribution to the specific community or location.



Not have disrespected others on the basis of race, tradition or sexual orientation

Any name that is or could be considered discriminatory or offensive will not be approved.



Not duplicate an existing place name in the area

VICNAMES has regulations around the use of the same name in close proximity.

◆ **Finding Her tip**

Her Place actively encourages nominations for under-represented groups – First Nations women, women from multicultural communities, LGBTIQ+ people, and women living with disability. Public commemoration should reflect the full diversity of the people who have shaped Victoria.

Examples

- ◆ Teresa Bruno’s contributions to food and culture in Brunswick have been commemorated by a Mural. Her story and the mural’s location appear on the Finding Her Map.
- ◆ Alice Anderson, Australia’s first female garage owner, operated her business on Cotham Road in Kew. Currently, a team of descendants, researchers, and residents is raising funds for a statue. The City of Boroondara has approved the project and allocated land near the site of her Garage.
- ◆ Yvonne Goolagong Cawley’s significance as an Aboriginal tennis champion and advocate for youth has recently been recognised by **Goolagong Day** at the Australian Open. She is also recognised by a street, a park and tennis courts.

For other forms of commemoration

Formal place naming is one path – but not the only one. If a place name is not possible or not yet appropriate, commemoration can take many other meaningful forms. Some families and communities may prefer these alternatives or pursue them in parallel with a formal naming campaign.

Physical spaces	Public artworks	Symbolic & digital
Streets, roads, parks, reserves, community centres, civic buildings, libraries, kindergartens, sporting facilities	Murals, sculptures, statues, outdoor plaques, honour boards, memorial stones, public installations	Exhibitions, digital storytelling, honour rolls, community events, oral history archives, Finding Her map inclusion

Examples

- ◆ Jordan Clarke’s advocacy for inclusive education could be recognised through the naming of a kindergarten, a mural in the community, inclusion in an exhibition, or a library program. Many of these can happen simultaneously, or it may take time as processes such as place naming can take years.
- ◆ Leilani Rigby’s environmental activism in Fitzroy, including leading river clean-up projects, could be commemorated with a plaque at the site of her campaigns. She may be nominated for the Victorian Women’s Honour Roll.
- ◆ Priya Deshmukh’s work supporting girls in STEM education in Dandenong could be recognised through a scholarship program named in her honour, combining ongoing impact with lasting recognition. Alternatively, she may be featured in Her Place’s STEMPOWERED digital exhibition.

2 Why documenting her story matters – before anything else

Before any nomination or project, research and documentation are the essential first steps. It ensures her story is preserved for the long term – regardless of what form the commemoration ultimately takes.

Strong documentation serves multiple purposes:

- ✦ **It preserves her story:** Once living memory fades, documented records become the only evidence of a woman’s contributions. Records may be harder to find for women and underrepresented groups; this makes documenting work more important, not less.
- ✦ **It strengthens any formal submission:** Councils, government agencies and GNV all require credible, verifiable evidence. A well-documented biography with sources is the foundation of a successful nomination.
- ✦ **It enables culturally respectful commemoration:** Thorough research — including consultation with family, community and, where relevant, Traditional Owner groups — ensures the commemoration is accurate, meaningful and appropriate.
- ✦ **It supports the Finding Her map:** Stories documented with Her Place Women’s Museum may be featured on the Finding Her digital map or in public exhibitions, giving women’s legacies ongoing visibility across Victoria.

✦ **Finding Her tip**

Her Place Women’s Museum has a dedicated Biography Data Collection Form to help you document the woman’s story thoroughly. Use it from the beginning — it will support you in an important aspect of the commemoration process, from the inclusion of the Finding Her map to a formal GNV submission.

3 Five steps to a strong nomination

These steps apply whether you are pursuing a formal place name, a public artwork, a digital story, or a community commemoration. Stronger evidence leads to stronger outcomes at every stage.

PLEASE NOTE: While you may submit a strong nomination, a series of assessments is undertaken, and therefore, checking all the boxes may not guarantee the nomination is gazetted. This is why it is important to be aware of the range of ways you can achieve commemorative justice.

Step 1	Document her legacy	Record her achievements, advocacy, and community contributions. Establish her connection to the place or community. Collect testimonials and personal stories from family, friends, colleagues and community members. Use the Finding Her Biography Template as your framework.
Step 2	Compile supporting evidence	Gather letters of support, historical records, newspaper articles, books, archival materials, photographs and website links. Even small pieces of documentation strengthen your case — particularly for women and underrepresented groups, where formal records may be harder to find.
Step 3	Engage with family	Ensure all close family members are aware of and supportive of the nomination. Seek written consent. Provide family contacts for verification. Her Place Women’s Museum has a family invitation letter template that can be sent via a council or developer, where privacy laws prevent direct contact.
Step 4	Build community support	Letters of support, a petition, a community survey, or a local meeting all demonstrate that there is genuine community backing for the commemoration. This carries significant weight with naming authorities and councils.

Step 5	Prepare and lodge	<p>For a formal place name: Use the GNV Submission Readiness Checklist to prepare your evidence package for your local naming authority.</p> <p>For a Finding Her map nomination: Use the Finding Her Nomination Submission Form. For a biography to accompany any commemoration: use the Biography Template.</p>
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4 Gathering testimonials and support material

Testimonials are one of the most powerful elements of any nomination. They personalise the story, demonstrate real community impact, and give reviewers – whether a council, GNV or a Finding Her selection panel – a vivid picture of the person’s significance.

Who to approach

- ◆ Family members who can share personal anecdotes about her life, values and character
- ◆ Friends and colleagues who witnessed her work and commitment firsthand
- ◆ Community members who directly benefited from her contributions – neighbours, participants in her projects, recipients of her advocacy
- ◆ Professionals who worked alongside her – doctors, teachers, community organisers, researchers
- ◆ Historians, academics or authors who have documented her field or her specific contributions

What to ask

Provide people with specific prompts to help them write meaningful testimonials:

- ◆ What specific actions or projects did she undertake that had a positive impact on the community?
- ◆ How did her work or advocacy make a difference in your life, or in the lives of others you know?
- ◆ What personal qualities made her stand out – her compassion, leadership, determination, creativity?
- ◆ How was her work connected to this particular place or community?
- ◆ What would be lost if her story were not recorded and recognised?

Formats for testimonials

- ◆ Written letters or emails (preferred for formal nominations – include the person’s name, relationship to the nominee, and consent to use the testimonial)
- ◆ Recorded audio or video messages (particularly valuable for oral history and Finding Her story production)
- ◆ Social media posts or community forum comments that reference her work (screenshot and preserve these – they can disappear)
- ◆ Formal letters from historians, academics, organisations or professional associations

Examples of strong testimonials

“My grandmother, Amira Hassan, tirelessly advocated for women’s health in Brunswick, creating programmes that helped countless families. Her compassion inspired me to volunteer in community health.”

– Family member

“Working with Amira on the local health initiative was transformative. Her vision created a lasting, positive impact on our neighbourhood – the programmes she started are still running today.”
 – Colleague

“Amira’s work allowed me to access essential services I otherwise couldn’t afford. She changed lives in this community, and she deserves to be remembered here.”
 – Community member

◆ **Finding Her tip**
 When submitting testimonials, always include the name and relationship of the person providing it (if they consent to being identified), the context or situation they are describing, and their permission to use it in the nomination.
 Group testimonials under themes – leadership, community impact, advocacy, cultural contribution – to show the depth and breadth of her legacy.

5 Demonstrating connection to place

Victoria’s naming rules require that a commemorative name have a ‘link to place’ – the person must have a genuine connection to the specific location being named.
 This section explains what counts as a strong connection and how to document it.

Types of connection to look for

Where she lived or worked	Did she grow up, live or spend significant years in this area? Was her professional or volunteer work based here? Example: Rhoda Bell spent 20 years in Surrey Hills, running a health programme from the Union Road clinic.
Where she made her impact	Was this place the centre of her advocacy, service or projects? Did she leave a lasting mark through her initiatives? Example: A statue there would be deeply connected to her story.
Where her work is still felt	Are there lasting programmes, buildings or community initiatives in the area tied to her efforts? Example: Mary Jones founded a literacy programme in Footscray whose workshops are still held at the local library today.
Symbolic connections	Sometimes the nominee’s work may align with a location’s symbolic importance, even if she was not directly based there. Example: Naming a park after an Aboriginal athlete in a region where First Nations children play sport could honour her legacy as a role model.

Evidence to gather

- ◆ Community testimonials from locals who can describe her influence on this specific area

- ◆ Newspaper articles, photos or archival records that place her work in this location
- ◆ Maps, photographs or historical images showing key locations connected to her life or work
- ◆ References to existing local landmarks, plaques or programmes tied to her contributions

◆ Finding Her tip

Be specific. 'She hosted workshops at the South Melbourne Town Hall every month for five years' is far stronger than 'she was involved in community activities in South Melbourne.'

Show ongoing impact – if the area continues to reflect her values or benefit from her work today, that is compelling evidence of why this is the right place to honour her.

6 Contacting historians, authors and experts

Reaching out to historians, authors or researchers who have written about your nominee – or about her field, era or community – can significantly strengthen a nomination. Their expertise adds credibility, and they may have access to records, photographs or materials that aren't widely available.

How to find the right experts

- ◆ Search university history departments, Australian Women's Archives Project, Public Record Office Victoria, and State Library Victoria for researchers working in your nominee's field or time period
- ◆ Contact us as Finding Her @ Her Place and learn about our research services and resources
- ◆ Check the bibliography of any books or articles about your nominee – the authors are your starting point
- ◆ Contact local historical societies, heritage organisations, and community groups that were active in the same area or era
- ◆ Ask Her Place Women's Museum – our research team can often connect you with the right people

What to ask for

- ◆ Published or unpublished materials – research notes, photos, newspaper clippings, oral history recordings – that document your nominee's contributions
- ◆ A letter of support confirming the nominee's significance and their connection to the community or place
- ◆ Verification of specific facts, dates or achievements that will strengthen the biography
- ◆ Introductions to other researchers, family members or community contacts who may be able to contribute

✉ Email template

Subject: Request for Support: [Nominee's Name] Commemoration – [Place/Project Name]

Dear [Author's / Historian's Name],

My name is [Your Name], and I am preparing a nomination to honour [Nominee's Name] through a [commemorative place name / public artwork / Finding Her map inclusion] as part of the Put Her Name On It program led by Her Place Women's Museum.

Your work on [specific book, article, exhibition or area of research] has been invaluable in understanding [Nominee's Name]'s remarkable contributions. I believe your insights would greatly strengthen this nomination.

Would you be willing to:

- ◆ Provide a letter of support confirming her significance and connection to [specific place]?

◆ Share any published or unpublished materials, photographs or records that document her work?

I would be happy to provide further details about the nomination and how your contribution would be acknowledged. Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Thank you sincerely for your time and for the work you do in preserving these histories.

Warm regards,
 [Your Name]
 [Your contact information]

7 What to expect – after you submit

The formal place naming process can take time. Understanding what happens at each stage helps you stay informed and advocate effectively throughout.

For formal place name nominations (via a naming authority)

Your evidence goes to the naming authority	Your council (or relevant government agency) receives your research, biography, family consent and community support materials. They assess whether to proceed with adding to a name bank for consideration.
Places are identified to be named	Council reviews names in line with place naming opportunities.
Community consultation is run	The naming authority conducts a minimum 30-day public consultation, notifying affected residents in writing. Objections can be lodged during this period.
Council review	Council reviews community consultation outcomes and votes on undertaking the formal submission process.
The naming authority prepares the GNV submission	The council or agency completes the formal submission form and lodges it with Geographic Names Victoria (GNV) via the VICMAP Editing Service. Only naming authorities can do this – not individuals.
GNV reviews and decides	GNV checks compliance with the naming rules. Compliant proposals are gazetted in the Victorian Government Gazette and registered in VICNAMES, making the name official. In situations where names are non-compliant, GNV informs the council.
Timeline	The full process, from first approaching your council to a name being gazetted, can take months, years or longer, depending on council processes, consultation outcomes and GNV review. Persistence and a well-prepared evidence package make a significant difference but do not guarantee success.

For Finding Her map nominations

Panel review	Finding Her nominations for existing commemoration are assessed by a selection panel with expertise in gender equity. Nominations are assessed against finding Her’s eligibility and significance criteria.
Research and story production	Successful nominations are researched, and a story is developed in consultation with family and community – including video, biography and photographs.
Map publication	Stories are published on the Finding Her digital map at findingher.org.au , linked to the physical site via QR code. They may also be featured in exhibitions at Her Place Women’s Museum.
Retained nominations	Eligible nominations that are not selected in the current round are retained by Her Place Women’s Museum for future consideration.

8 Finding Her Research Services – how we can help

Her Place Women’s Museum offers specialist support for anyone seeking to commemorate a Victorian woman – whether you are an individual, a family, a community group, an organisation or a council.

Finding Her @ Her Place brings together deep expertise in Australian women’s history, gender equity and public commemoration with practical, on-the-ground project support.

Our services include

Research & documentation	In-depth biographical research, fact-checking, source verification, and intersectional historical analysis. We can help find records for women whose stories are underrepresented in mainstream archives.
Biography preparation	Expert support in writing, reviewing and finalising biographies suitable for Finding Her map publication, formal GNV submissions, and other public commemoration projects.
Family engagement	Guidance and templates for approaching and involving families, including our invitation letter template for use by councils and developers where privacy laws prevent direct contact.
Culturally sensitive consultation	Support for nominations involving First Nations women, including guidance on identifying and approaching the right Traditional Owner groups and Registered Aboriginal Parties.
Nomination and submission support	Practical advice on completing nomination forms, preparing evidence packages, and working with naming authorities, councils and other bodies.
Public visibility	Projects supported by Her Place Women’s Museum may be featured on the Finding Her digital map or in exhibitions at Abbotsford Convent, amplifying women’s stories across Victoria.

<p>Digital & physical archive</p>	<p>Her Place Women’s Museum maintains a growing digital archive of women’s histories. Contributing a woman’s story to the archive ensures it is preserved and accessible for future generations.</p>
<p>Workshops & training</p>	<p>Gender-based and intersectional place naming, exhibitions and commemoration workshops for councils, developers and community organisations. Includes preparation, delivery and follow-up materials.</p>
<p>Exhibition services</p>	<p>Professionally curated exhibitions at Her Place Women’s Museum at Abbotsford Convent or at metro and regional venues. Developed in consultation with clients and communities to bring women’s stories to life.</p>

◆ **Finding Her tip**
 Select projects supported by the Finding Her @ Her Place are featured on the Finding Her map or in Her Place exhibitions at Abbotsford Convent, helping to link local initiatives to broader gender equity outcomes across Victoria.

Get in touch – we are here to help
 Whether you are at the very beginning – with just an idea and a name – or well into a nomination with research in hand, Her Place Women’s Museum can help you take the next step.

Finding Her @ Her Place:
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Her Place Women’s Museum
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 herplacemuseum.org.au

Finding Her digital map: findingher.org.au

Geographic Names Victoria: land.vic.gov.au/place-naming

VICNAMES register: lassi.land.vic.gov.au/landing/enquiry/VICNAMES

Registrar of Aboriginal Parties: justice.vic.gov.au/rap

Documents in this suite
[Finding Her Place – Guide to Commemoration](#) · [Finding Her Nomination Submission Form](#) · [Biography Template](#) · [Biography Research Guidance](#) · [GNV Submission Readiness Checklist](#) · [Intersections in Place – Guideline](#) · [Intersections in Place – Checklist](#) · [Family Invitation Letter Template](#) · [Cultural Protocols Framework](#)